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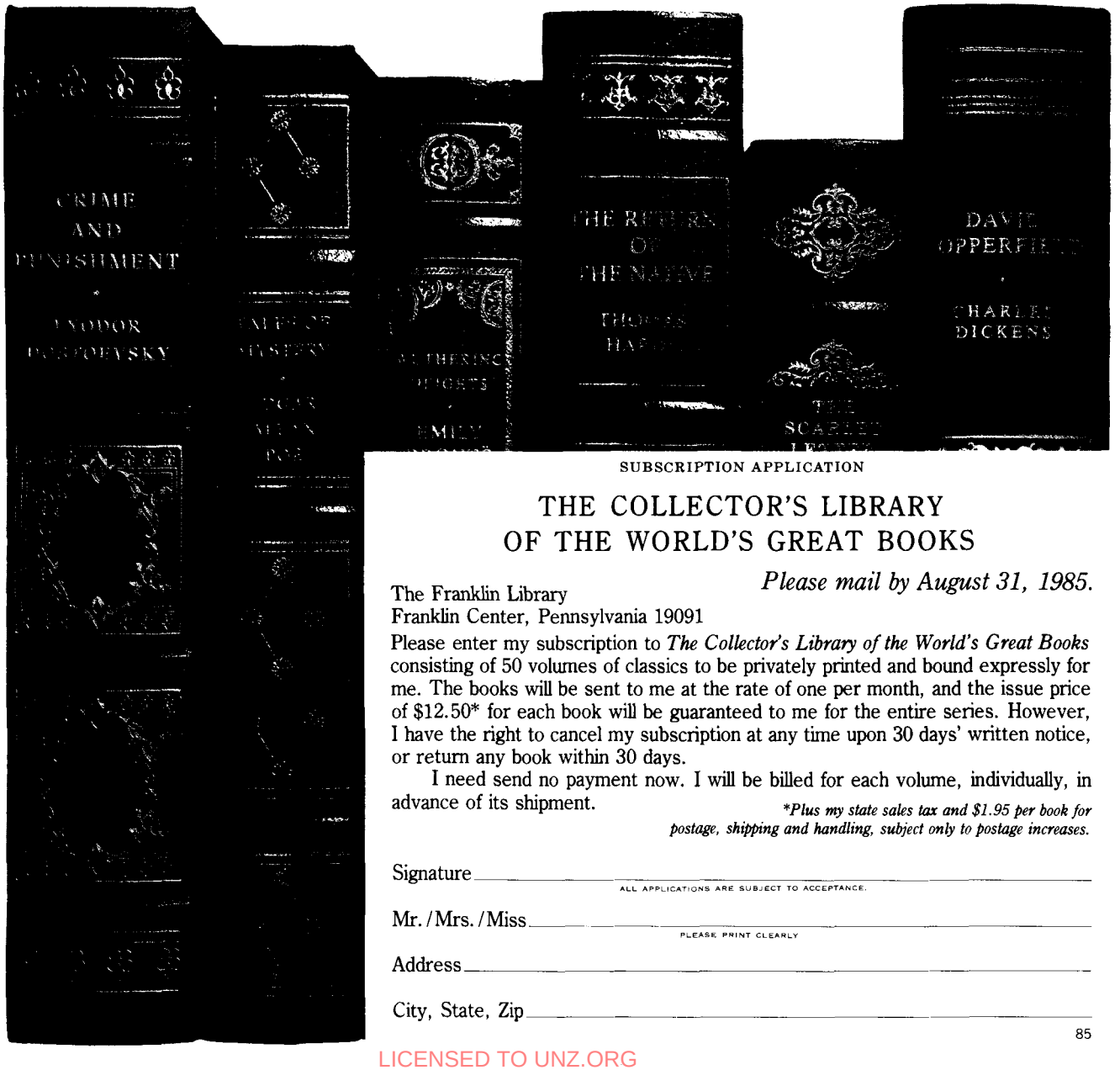

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FROM WASHINGTON

Reagan's Guts

Even before the doctors removed two feet of President Reagan's intestines, many conservatives were becoming alarmed about his lack of guts. A month and many brave words after the end of the TWA hijacking, there has been no reprisal. "The American people are not—I repeat, not—going to tolerate intimidation, terror, and outright acts of war against this nation and its people," Reagan told the American Bar Association. But so far, he's tolerated it. Combined with the similar lack of response to the 1983 bombing of our Beirut Marine barracks and to lesser provocations such as the recent murder of six Americans in El Salvador, this is beginning to leave the impression that Reagan's formula is the opposite of Teddy Roosevelt's: all shtick, no stick.

Actually, however much it may dismay right-wing activists and the armchair warriors around Washington, Reagan's approach reflects a characteristically acute understanding of what the American people want. We approve of tough talk and pugnacious swagger, but we have little stomach for actual bloodshed, especially our own. The only wars we like are ones like Grenada that are over by the time we wake up. What Reagan has given us is the foreign policy equivalent of his politically successful approach to government spending. People love hearing denunciations of big government, but they don't want any of their middle-class benefits and subsidies touched. In both domestic and foreign affairs, Reagan has tapped a rich vein of democratic hypocrisy.

Trouble is, tough talk combined with no action is not a stable equilibrium. As an actual response to the challenges of terrorism and communism, it is certainly worse than a dignified silence. With each episode, the threat to use American strength when it's really needed becomes less credible. Politically, as well, all the Rambo chatter creates a powerful momentum. Reagan is under increasing pressure to prove he has guts—the clinical term is "a willingness to use force"—by doing *something* to *somebody somewhere*—and *soon*.

But what? Henry Kissinger and Ted Koppel had this illuminating exchange on ABC News "Nightline" during the hijack crisis:

Kissinger: *You exert pressure by making [the terrorist] pay a price he's unwilling to pay.*

Koppel: *Which is?*

Kissinger: *Which is that—this would have to be—this would have to be studied.*

Having studied, the president "now believes military force should be a component of the response" to terrorism, Lou Cannon of *The Washington Post* reported mid-July. But the military response would have to be "surgical" and "clearly tied to a terrorist act," with "an after-the-fact justification that could be supported by aerial photographs." Since the Beirut moment has now passed, this leaves the administration in the odd position of hoping for another terrorist action so it can prove its mettle by retaliating. Ideally, the White House might prefer a variety of crises from which to choose the one with the best possibilities for aerial photography.

Whether the United States ought to punish proven terrorists if this can be achieved without any harm to innocents or any risk of disproportionate American loss is not a very interesting question. Nor is it pressing, since the laboratory conditions Reagan is waiting for are unlikely to arise. It's precisely because war is inevitably messy that the hawks are losing patience with Reagan's fastidiousness. If he's too fussy, they fret, we'll *never* get to flex our muscles. But it's for the same reason that others are disturbed by all the Rambunctious talk. The problem with acting tough isn't in principle; it's in practice.

One advantage of the concept of "state-sponsored terrorism," which the administration has promoted, is that it opens vistas of potential retaliation against entire state military establishments rather than shadowy terrorist groups. In his ABA speech, Reagan listed five nations as sponsors of a terrorist network, including Nicaragua (though not including Syria). Under this theory, presumably, the president could legitimately take up *The Wall Street Journal*'s suggestion of retaliating for the terrorism in Beirut by bombing Managua.

Trouble is, the same people who complain most bitterly about "state-sponsored terrorism" tend to be the most enthusiastic proponents of United States support for "freedom fighters" like the *contras*. Whatever help Nicaragua has given to guerrillas in El Salvador pales in comparison to the help we've given the guerrillas in Nicaragua. Of course the *contras* are allegedly fighting for democracy. But the very notion of "terrorism" depends on a belief that certain kinds of behavior are unacceptable, whatever their purpose. "Terrorists' means discredit their ends," Secretary of State Shultz has said.

The concept of "terrorism," in other words, is part of the very set of legalistic constraints on American behavior that the muscle-flexing crowd finds so infuriating: treaties, consultations with allies, respect for national sovereignty, and so on.

Despairing of America's willingness to shed its own blood, the hawks now aspire to an aggressive foreign policy composed of surgery and surrogates: "clinical" air strikes on whomever combined with support for client subversive groups in nations we don't like. In practice, this looks a lot like terrorism, and we shouldn't be surprised if people retaliate in kind. We can't foment chaos in the world and remain immune from it. That's why it's harder to play president than it is to play Rambo.

Notice

This is a combined issue of TNR. We will not publish next week.

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

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CORRESPONDENCE

DOCTORING DEFENSIVELY

To the editors:

It may well be, as TRB states, "hard for an outsider to choose sides [between the organized medical and legal professions] because both parties are so unattractive" ("The Doctor-Lawyer War," June 24). And a compensation fund for injured patients may have merit as a partial solution to the medical malpractice problem. Even so, TRB's discussion is cynical and ill-informed. Regrettably, TRB cites without rebuttal the lawyers' argument "that defensive medicine is what any sensible patient wants his doctor to practice anyway." Defensive medicine doesn't just cost money; it violates, injures, and even kills patients. A prime example is the rising cesarean section rate, which threatens to turn childbirth into a routine surgical procedure, depriving women of the exercise of a normal, healthy physical function.

Compensating "victims of botched medical care" is fine, but there is still a need to distinguish between actual medical negligence and the uncertainties of nature. Much malpractice litigation results not from improper care, but from bad outcomes compounded by magical expectations and the failure of the doctor-patient relationship. Naive as it may sound, my colleagues and I believe that unjustified malpractice suits are more often motivated by grief than by greed—both of which are exacerbated by advertisements by lawyers telling people that, for example, having a baby with birth defects may be grounds for a malpractice claim.

Doctors and patients need to share both the intellectual and emotional burdens of seeking to make good decisions while knowing that the outcome is never guaranteed.

ARCHIE BRODSKY
Program in Psychiatry and the Law
Harvard Medical School
Boston, Massachusetts

SAVE YOUR WHOLE LIFE

To the editors:

How disillusioning when THE NEW REPUBLIC editorializes on a subject about which it is abysmally lacking in knowledge, adding a dash of sarcasm. I refer to "Tax-Reform Watch" (Notebook, July 15&22), which refers to the "vigorous lobbying mounted by the life insurance industry."

Under current law the culprit, according to TNR, is the "whole life" insurance policy, which "builds up tax-free [income] until it is paid out." How stupid! In practically every instance the "build-up" is less than the premium paid. The article goes on: "This loophole is the only advantage of 'whole life' insurance, which otherwise is a nonsensical investment for most people." TNR recommends the purchase of cheaper "term" insurance, where folks pay only for the actual protection and invest their own savings however they wish.

Oh, how often during 60 years in the life insurance industry have I heard this argument "buy term and invest the difference." What happens when that reasoning is followed? Term is bought and the difference is wasted. Only when a plan compels folks to do so will they manage to build a nest egg. "Whole life" insurance serves a noble purpose and in the long run is far less expensive than "term."

MAX E. ROBKIN
Atlanta, Georgia

SISTER MARY EXPLAINED

To the editors:

In his review of the new Christopher Durang play, *The Marriage of Bette and Boo* ("Combating Amnesia," July 1), Robert Brustein has wandered outside the reviewed work for a gratuitous attack on the Anti-Defamation League as well as on the consciences and commitments of those persons who are not quite ready to dismiss all outrage with the facile cop-out that "anything goes."

Making passing reference to Durang's "celebrated" Catholic-baiting play, *Sister Mary Ignatius Explains It All for You*, Mr. Brustein writes: "Facing an effort generated by religious groups (including the Anti-Defamation League!) to suppress *Sister Mary*, [Durang] has recently become an advocate of another traditional memory in danger of being forgotten, the First Amendment rights."

The measure of Mr. Durang's advocacy of such rights is his recent suggestion that ADL, not being a Catholic organization, has no right to express an opinion about his play. Our opinion, needless to say, was that *Sister Mary*, ridiculing the most sacred beliefs of Roman Catholics, was highly offensive to this group of Americans.

We did not attempt to "suppress" Mr. Durang's play. The word is *criticize*—which, after all, is Mr. Brustein's own profession—and this surely is an exercise of our First Amendment rights as well as the 72-year-old commitment of ADL "to secure justice and fair treatment to all citizens alike."

JUSTIN J. FINGER
Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith
New York, New York

SALT FAKERS

To the editors:

The readership of THE NEW REPUBLIC has not been well served by the article "SALT Shakers" by Steven E. Miller in the July 8 issue.

For arms control policies to increase security and stability, all parties must comply with existing agreements. Attempts to hide from the reality of Soviet noncompliance by attacking the process that revealed the violations, by belittling the significance of the violations, or by advocating the ex post facto legitimization of the violations do not serve the interest of arms control.

The U.S. has provided every opportunity for the Soviets to provide any information that would support the assertion that the Krasnoyarsk is a legal radar. No such information has been forthcoming. Since the Krasnoyarsk radar is not consistent with any of the three large, phased-array radar functions allowed by the ABM Treaty, the U.S. government has had to conclude that it is a violation. The article suggests that the Krasnoyarsk problem can be solved by calling this violation a "loophole" and rewriting the ABM Treaty to legitimize the radar. Such a "solution" may create ex post facto compliance but guarantees that the Soviets will only be encouraged in their disregard for their arms control obligations.

Soviet statements were unresponsive to U.S. concerns that the SS-X-25 ICBM is a prohibited new type and that Soviet telemetry encryption impeded verification in violation of SALT II. Mr. Miller asserts that the U.S. data base is too weak to support the conclusion that the SS-X-25 is a violation. Data obtained by the U.S. fully support the conclusion

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THE NEW REPUBLIC
AUGUST 12 & 19, 1985

WISH LIST

The sad Middle Eastern phenomenon known as "the peace process" suffered another alleged breakthrough last week, with the submission by the PLO of a long-awaited list of Palestinians to represent their people alongside Jordan in a meeting with representatives of the Reagan administration. Jordanian and American officials claim that such a meeting would be a preliminary to a grand negotiation with Israel. It is unlikely, however, that that is the PLO's intention. Such a meeting would mark, rather, the final realization of its most cherished political dream—not peace with Israel, but peace with the United States.

A look at Yasir Arafat's candidates for Palestinian diplomacy reveals again the true character of his leadership. The list is a transparent disguise for the self-interest of one Palestinian (Arafat) and one Palestinian party (his), and the prospects of relief for the Palestinian masses be damned. Arafat appears to view the population of the West Bank and Gaza, whose flag he ostensibly carries, as political competition. The lonely two Palestinians from the occupied territories who made the cut are less than noteworthy. One is the editor of *Al Fajr*, the East Jerusalem paper whose Palestinian nationalism mixes the moderate with the militant, the other the former head of the Gaza bar association. The absence of the real political leaders of the West Bank and Gaza, such as Elias Freij and Rashid al-Shawa, who have the trust of the Palestinians and the respect of the Israelis, is glaring. Evidently Arafat fears what peace with Israel, or even negotiation for peace with Israel, might do to their standing in the Palestinian community, which is already high; and conversely, to the standing of the PLO, which is already low. As usual, Arafat has put his own ambitions first. (He continues to do the same in southern Lebanon, where the PLO insists on smuggling weapons, and bringing violence, into a place where nobody wants it.)

Moreover, the list is an insult to the peace process circa 1985. It amounts to an insistence on the one point that will make talks impossible: that Israel sit down with the PLO. For the list is nothing but a PLO list. After more than a decade of Al Fatah terrorism against the Jewish state, Arafat proposes for its kind consideration a meeting with a founder of Al Fatah, Khaled al-Hassan. After three years of war to rid Israel's northern region of the violent PLO satrapy in southern Lebanon, Israel is now asked to make the acquaintance of the former head of the PLO in southern Lebanon, Saleh al-Taamri. Whatever you think of the Israelis' refusal to negotiate with the PLO—we think it is morally and politically unimpeachable—that refusal remains a fact. In this sense Israel is holding all the cards. Those Palestinians who wish to start on the way to some form of political enfranchisement must acknowledge it.

Of course, Arafat knows that too. His list is not the product of political naïveté, or ideological zeal. He merely has a different calculation in mind. The actual address of the PLO proposal is not Jerusalem, where its rejection was a certainty. It is Washington, where some tortured attempt to accept it, alas, was also a certainty. So far the Reagan administration has been fulfilling Arafat's fondest hopes. While it cannot quite praise his proposal, it can condemn Israel's condemnation of it. With all the huffing and puffing that has become the characteristic tone of Reagan foreign policy, the State Department announced that Israel does not have "a veto over our decisions." Well, Israel never pretended to. It merely expects its American ally to honor its commitment of 1975 to shun the PLO until it recognizes Israel. The commitment was made by Henry Kissinger, who is in a position to remind his friend George Shultz of it. It is not Israel that has vetoed the peace process; it is the PLO, by producing this cynical list. (And Jordan too. King Hussein cannot possibly have expected Israel to look kindly on the list. His proposal to advance the cause of peace, therefore, was really a proposal to retard the cause of peace—and, not incidentally, to improve his chances for a hefty American arms deal in the fall.) Moreover, Israel may ask the U.S. not to collaborate in any diversion from the Camp David framework for autonomy, which is also what the PLO has in mind.

The State Department is behaving a little contemptibly in this affair. At a time when it is hoarse with denunciations of "international terrorism," it seems to expect its

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ally, "international terrorism's" greatest victim, to sit down with the people who invented it. When the history of late 20th-century terrorism comes to be written—the sordid story of the Red Brigades, the Red Army, the Islamic Jihad, the Baader-Meinhof gang, the Basque ETA, and so on—Yasir Arafat's PLO will be given pride of place as its progenitor and its paradigm. Moreover, the American failure to ratify Israel's refusal might have the consequence of imperiling Shimon Peres's government. Peres simply cannot accept the Jordanian-Palestinian proposal and remain in office. Does our government, which makes daily votive gestures toward the idea of peace, really want to bring Yitzhak Shamir's irredentist Likud party closer to power? In similar circumstances Jimmy Carter helped to defeat Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in 1977 and found Menachem Begin in his place: not a smart maneuver. Of course Arafat could live with the Likud rather comfortably. Peace would be a still remoter possibility, and a precedent would have been set for relations with the United States. George Shultz should think again, then, about the political consequences of his lack of clarity.

As for the Israelis, obviously they cannot leave their policy with a rejection of the list and another barrage of mixed signals. A forthright response to the Palestinian-Jordanian proposal, a positive idea about a way to advance Israeli-Palestinian relations, is required. We believe that Yitzhak Rabin had one, when he suggested that any serious representative from the West Bank should be acceptable to Israel for negotiations, period. According to reports, Peres has already acted on this principle, in agreeing to credit the two West Bankers on the Jordanian-Palestinian list. Unlike the other casuistic criteria that have been put forward (PLO no, Palestinian National Council yes, but only if not PLO, and so on), the Rabin criterion has the merit of addressing the historical heart of the problem. Whatever agreement is reached about the West Bank, it will have to be reached with the citizens of the West Bank. They, and not the ideologues and the assassins and the sectarians of the PLO, are the people with whom the Israelis will have to live. Yasir Arafat knows that too, which is why he is wary about sharing power with his own people.

NOTEBOOK

□ FIRST PRIZE FOR DOUBLE-BACK-FLIP POLITICAL ANALYSIS: " 'My sense,' says Kevin Phillips, a Republican analyst and frequent Reagan critic, 'is that what a lot of people perceive as tangential setbacks, like Bitburg, the hostage situation, and now the president's health, may actually have bolstered his popularity and taken attention away from the fundamental weakness of his administration' "—quoted in *The Wall Street Journal*, July 17.

□ NO PROPHET: Due to an editing error, last week's Jerusalem Diarist referred to "reconstructed places where the Prophet Mohammed apparently worshiped" near David's Tower along the walls of the old city. The intended reference was to ancient Moslem places of worship, not to places where Mohammed himself worshiped.

□ FORTY YEARS AGO IN THE NEW REPUBLIC: "One is tempted to conclude that the rulers of Japan, in failing to accept unconditional surrender, are acting like a kamikaze pilot, caring nothing about self-destruction as long as the utmost possible damage may be inflicted on the enemy. It is a foregone conclusion that continuation of resistance means their country will be laid waste, and the only purpose they can accomplish in choosing this course is further damage to the attackers." (The Editors, "Japan Rejects," August 6, 1945.)

King Ron and his royal polyp.

POLITICAL AILMENTS

IF GERALDINE FERRARO were to sell pictures of her colon to *Playboy*, the American people, judging by the events of the past few weeks, would not be taken aback. The coverage of the presidential polyp, aided and abetted by the president and first lady, has not only been maudlin and vulgar; it has also been one of those occasions, all too easy to let slip by in our absorption in the trivia, that exposes a malady in the political system. The person of the president is being exalted at the expense of the institution. Although everything in the coverage has been cheap in our contemporary fashion, the underlying purpose and effect have been sacerdotal. We have been witnessing an anointing of the royal person. Where the presidency should rule, we now have a president who reigns.

More deliberately than in any other administration, the presidency is being carried into the realm of the noontime soap. The Presidential Kiss, at the first public exhibition of it, would have made H. L. Mencken throw up, and he would have said so in print. It is not fitting for a first lady to arrive at a hospital like a balloon man. Yet all of this has been reported by the press with fawning wonder.

But these are the symptoms. Beyond them is the malady. The American presidency is being transformed into a radically popular institution—more and more dependent on, and at the same time able to exploit, a direct and uninterrupted relationship with the people. The result of such a relationship is always an enfeeblement of the executive office. Appealing directly to the people, the president becomes their creature.

In the limited monarchies, the principle "the king can do no wrong" was a legal fiction that applied to the office, and certainly not to the often disreputable or idiot figure who happened to be king. In the new popular presidency

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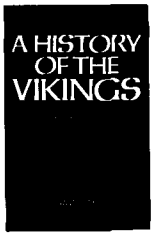

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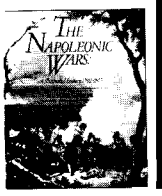

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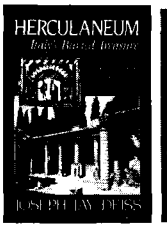

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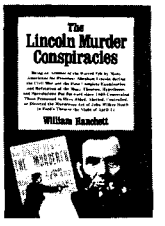

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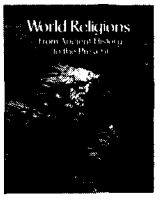

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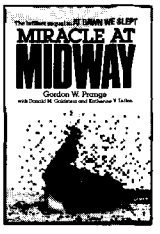

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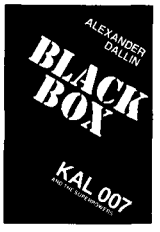

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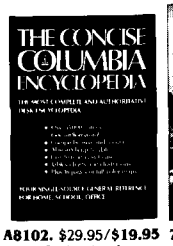

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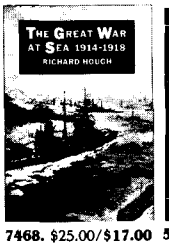

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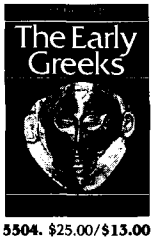

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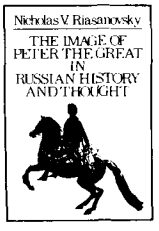

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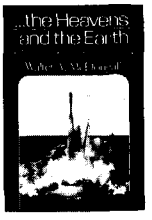

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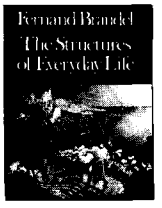

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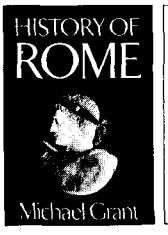

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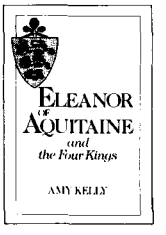

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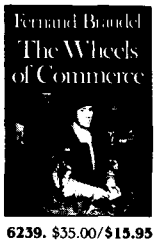

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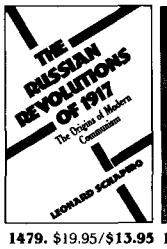

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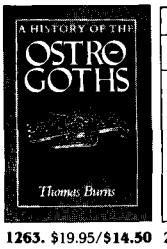

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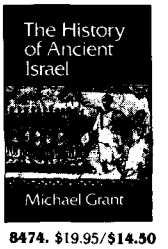

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the principle has been transferred to the man himself, in what is called the "Teflon effect." Presidential aides boast that they divert criticism from the president to themselves. What they are saying is: "The president can do no wrong, even though the presidency may be weak and blundering."

In a way, Reagan's conservative critics are making this point. They rightly point out that judged solely by the goals Reagan set himself, which he still proclaims, his presidency has been notably ineffectual. In resigning from the administration, David Stockman was saying, among other things, that the presidency of his president had been weak. The presidency has of course been weak before—but not while the president was acclaimed as strong.

FOR SOME YEARS now almost every important development in the American political system has been encouraging the direct relationship between the president and the people. These include the weakness of the parties and disarray of the party system; the dissipation of power in the House and Senate; the reliance on direct mail and media consultants in election campaigns; and of course the new prominence of the media, dominated by television. Separately and together they seduce the president into believing that he has only to be "The Great Communicator" with the people.

It is not too harsh to say that the media have groveled before the polyp. This is not surprising. In assisting in the creation of a royal presidency—and a popular presidency will always become a royal presidency—they share in some of the glory of the royal presence. They may be courtiers, on their knees before a polyp, but at least they are at court.

Television has many limitations in covering the news, and some of them are in the nature of the camera itself. It cannot get behind the closed doors where the important political struggles take place. It may be said that the old newspaperman was also barred from those rooms, but this is not altogether true. A reporter could (and still can) be satisfied with off-the-record talks with those who had been behind the closed doors. But the camera cannot do much with off-the-record news, and television has helped to make public appearances the meat of political news.

Whenever there is a crisis we watch pictures of the president emerging from a helicopter on the south lawn of the White House. Such is the mesmerizing power of television that even the most skeptical of us stare at the screen and begin to believe that "returning from Camp David" is in itself a political event, and even a bold action. The president then goes inside the White House, perhaps to surrender to hijackers. But we have seen him strong as he got out of the helicopter.

The effect of television, in fact, is to report the transport of the president's body in public as a political event in itself. Political reporting is more and more the coverage of royal appearances, not unlike the drives that Emperor Haile Selassie always took through his people at four o'clock every afternoon. There is no secret about this. Everyone knows that each morning the president's aides arrange where and when his body will be transported for the benefit of the media.

"But the media did not exalt Jimmy Carter. . . ." This, however, only proves the point. If the role of the president is to communicate directly with the people, and if the media are the main vehicle of communication, then the media will elevate those who use them most expertly.

This time there has even been a royal laying on of hands, that ingenious ruse by which monarchs claimed to heal those with scrofula. The media have been telling us sedulously that the coverage of the polyp will save thousands of lives, because the sovereign people will now rush to have their colons examined. *The New York Times* even devoted a front-page story to an intimate description of the colon of President Reagan's brother. There is not only a royal president, there is now a royal family.

All of this began, of course, with John F. Kennedy, who was called "the first television president." What it means now, as then, is that the popular president not only becomes a royal president, but the presidency ceases to work through the representative bodies in the political system. It seems to have been forgotten that the popular principle is always in conflict with the representative principle. A president looking for support to cut entitlements in order to reduce the deficits will not find that support in his direct relationship with the people. He will find it only in the parties, in the committees and subcommittees of Congress, and so on.

It is the strength of representative government that is at stake. Insofar as a popular and royal president tries to bypass the political process in which the representative principle is at work, then the presidency as an institution is enfeebled. This has been happening to the presidency for a quarter of a century. The coverage of the presidential polyp only made it starkly evident.

HENRY FAIRLIE

WHITE HOUSE WATCH

PRESIDENT FOR A DAY

NOT A SINGLE nation fell to communism on his watch. Not one American boy died in combat overseas. No discouraging words, let alone any gunfire, were exchanged with the Soviets or any other adversary. And the economy moved along smartly, in spite of dire warnings by the doomsayers. No one was thrown out in the cold. In fact, it was warm and mostly sunny all over America.

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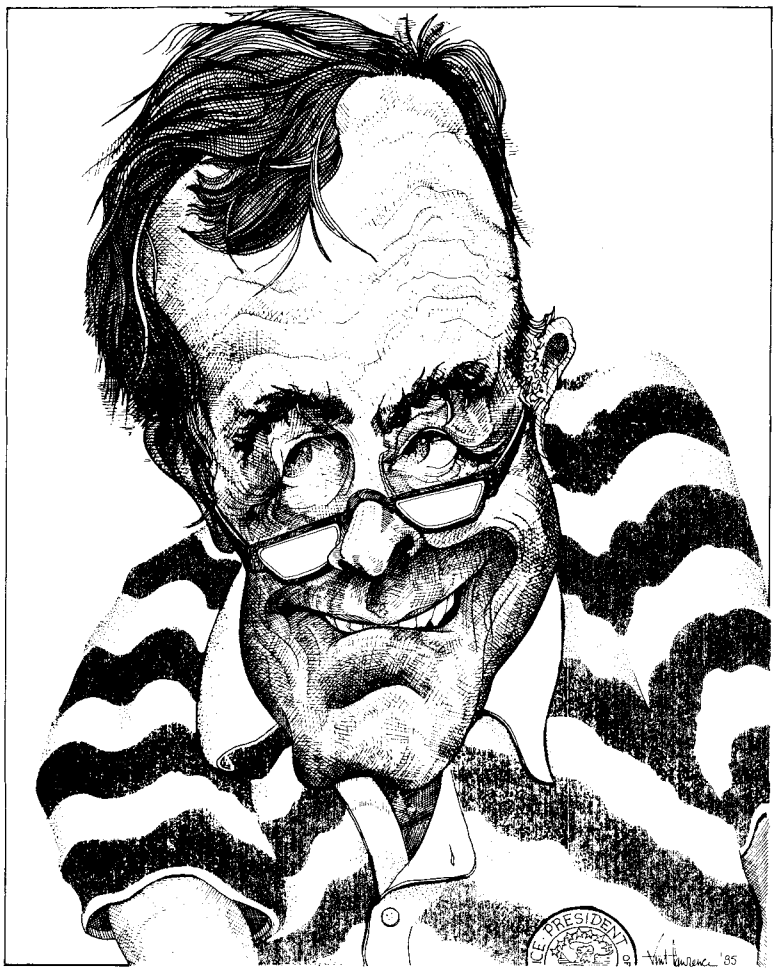
Suddenly George Bush has a theme for his bid for the 1988 Republican presidential nomination: let me continue, or at least let me resume. Imagine the appeal of this stump pitch: "Progress was made in my presidency, but I need more time to complete the job. You've given me eight hours. Now give me eight years." Actually, the first Bush presidency was only seven hours and 54 minutes, but why haggle? How many candidates in 1988 will be able to claim that the awesome weight of presidential authority rested on their shoulders at all, ever, even for a fleeting moment, much less for nearly eight glorious hours? Only one.

In truth, Vice President Bush made very little of his stint as acting president on July 13, while President Reagan was undergoing surgery for colon cancer and beginning his recovery. He didn't appear in public or hold a press conference. He didn't sign a bill, issue an order, or press a button. Instead, he played tennis with three friends and lollygagged around the house. It was a Saturday, after all. "I did just about what the president would have done if he'd been totally in command all day long," Bush says. "I took it easy." His low profile that day and during the week of Reagan's stay at Bethesda Naval Hospital surprised practically no one. It was conduct as usual for Bush, who long ago decided that loyalty and deference, not independence and a well-massaged ego, are the better part of vice presidential valor.



DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

When power was technically transferred to him—the exact time was 11:28 a.m., just as Reagan went under anesthesia—Bush wasn't aware of it. Having flown back that morning to Washington from his weekend home in Kennebunkport, Maine, Bush was snacking on popcorn and soft drinks with aides at his official residence when notification came at 11:50 a.m. It was no time for risky business. He took the call from Donald Regan, the White House chief of staff, on a "secure" phone in the pantry between the den and kitchen. "Did you know this was happening?" aide Craig Fuller asked afterward. "I was kind of expecting it," said Bush.

He certainly should have been. White House and Justice Department officials had been discussing for several days a possible transfer of presidential authority along the lines outlined in the 25th Amendment. Given the delicacy of the issue for him, Bush had taken no position. To act in a military emergency, Bush didn't need a letter from Reagan or decision by the cabinet; that would have come to him automatically under the National Command Authority. Invoking the 25th Amendment was unprecedented, and as such it was more disquieting than calming. But Bush is not one to criticize. "Under the circumstances, it probably provided the most stability," he says.

The reach of Bush's deference is wide. It extends not only to the president, but to First Lady Nancy Reagan and the White House chief of staff. Two days after Reagan's surgery, Fuller talked to Stuart Spencer, the political strategist who is close to both the president and first lady. Spencer said Bush should follow Mrs. Reagan's lead. Bush didn't need a high-priced professional to tell him this. That very day, he was prepared to replace Reagan in addressing a diplomatic gathering at the White House. But Mrs. Reagan wanted to substitute for her husband. Bush deferred to her.

Nor did he try to push his way into Reagan's company prematurely. It was five days after the president went into the hospital before Bush spoke a word to him. On Monday, July 15, he was ready to visit the patient. The vice presidential motorcade was lined up for a 9:45 a.m. departure from the White House. But it turned out that Reagan had fallen asleep, and Bush didn't want to disturb him. The trip was canceled, and Bush didn't get in to see the president until two days later.

Nothing was lost except face. As Bush cooled his heels, Regan was in and out of the president's hospital room, acting like the second-in-command. Regan was a study in high visibility. Not surprisingly, the contrast between Regan and Bush became a subject of breathless conversation in Washington. It was the quintessential inside-the-

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Beltway item. Nothing of substance was at stake. But it involved two questions that are staples of Washington chatter: Who's up? Who's down? This time the chatter was so loud it forced its way onto national television. "What about the idea that he [Regan] took over and prevented George Bush from having a more visible role in this period of time?" Lesley Stahl asked on "Face the Nation" on July 23. "That's a problem," answered political analyst Kevin Phillips.

Au contraire, says Bush. No problem at all. "I've told Don that," the vice president told me. "I think he handled it fine. I did not feel elbowed aside. I didn't feel inhibited by Don Regan from doing anything different." Some of Bush's associates disagree, muttering about Regan's lust for the limelight. "But that's more Regan's problem than Bush's problem," argues Vic Gold, the conservative writer and Bush adviser. "I don't think it reflects badly on Bush to be deferential. A vice president is supposed to be deferential." The question is how deferential. One White House official, who admires Bush, said Regan made the vice president "look like an errand boy. People will ask, if he lets the White House chief of staff push him around, how can he stand up to the presidency? Bush is just too reluctant to assert himself."

It's reticence by design, says Bush. "Here's the way I've rationalized all that. The best thing in terms of political science is to have the vice presidency amount to something. I think it is. That means, at times, you're not out plowing your own furrow. . . . The delicacy is there. You do have to understand, if you want to be effective as vice president, that you're not clicking off command decisions. Once you sort that out, then the job can be useful. You get assignments that flow from the president. That wouldn't happen if he didn't have confidence. There's a balancing between asserting your own views and differing in private so the president doesn't have to choose publicly between the vice president and someone else. . . . There could be some drawbacks, but the nice thing about it is I couldn't care less. I'm not going to change."

ONE NECESSITY for a vice president, Bush believes, is to get along with the president's staff. Or else you may wind up like Nelson Rockefeller, Gerald Ford's vice president. Rockefeller and Ford got along famously, but Rockefeller persisted in pushing an energy self-sufficiency scheme "that got him crosswise with the president's staff. The next thing you know, Nelson felt totally isolated, and the next thing you know, he wasn't on the ticket. There's a good lesson in all that." Bush follows the lesson in his relations with Regan as well as Reagan. He defers.

The drawbacks are many. He was ridiculed by the press as a cheerleader for Reagan in the campaign last year, except on those rare occasions when there was a centimeter of difference between his position and Reagan's. Then he was pounced on for contradicting administration policy. Bush and his aides resented the attacks, and there is a lingering residue of ill will toward the press. The feeling is mutual. Many reporters feel that Bush long ago crossed the line between being deferential and being, well, a wimp.

Bush is willing to suffer these indignities because there are also benefits in the trade-off between independence and deference. He gets missions from Reagan, some of them substantive, and maybe a blessing on his candidacy in 1988. In June Bush was dispatched to Europe to sell the Star Wars strategic defense system to America's NATO allies. Only two reporters signed up to accompany Bush. But at the last minute, three TV network correspondents joined. "It was clear the networks didn't care about the trip," explains Marlin Fitzwater, Bush's press secretary. "The TWA hostages had been taken, and they just assumed if the hostages were released, Bush would go." Their assumption proved correct. In fact, the whole thrust of Bush's trip changed. All his speeches had to be rewritten. "They became all terrorism and no Star Wars," says Fitzwater. And on Sunday, June 30, as the hostages were about to be set free, Bush found himself in a television studio in Paris about to be interviewed on "Face the Nation." Just before he went on the air, Bush summoned Fitzwater and asked, "Can you tell me one more time why I'm doing this TV show?" Bush had the nagging fear that a stray comment might cause Nabih Berri to stop the motorcade carrying the hostages to safety. He chose to say as little as possible.

NOW BUSH awaits the blessing. His 1988 campaign is falling into place. He has a new vice presidential staff headed by Fuller and adorned by the addition of Fitzwater, as able a press secretary as there is in the Reagan administration. Bush has a political action committee, the Fund for America's Future, with a suite in Washington, including an office set aside for Bush. The PAC has raised one million dollars since it was established in May. He has recruited Lee Atwater, the deputy manager of Reagan's campaign last year, as his chief political adviser. And Bush won't have run away from the president he served, as Walter Mondale did. Ron Kaufman, who directs Bush's PAC, explains, "He can say, 'I'm running for president on a foundation that's been built in the last eight years. I'm proud of every brick. It's a solid foundation to build on.' "

But what about the presidential blessing? That may never come in so many words. Reagan often praises Bush to the hilt. In April the president told a crowd of GOP high rollers this about Bush: "I don't think there has ever been a man that held the office he holds who has done so much and been so involved in everything that we're trying to do." But Michael Deaver, Reagan's longtime adviser, says the president will never endorse a successor. Kaufman says he expects Reagan to "anoint" Bush without endorsing him, whatever that means.

For all their camaraderie, something seems missing in the Bush-Reagan alliance. Bush says he flew back to Washington the day of Reagan's operation for "personal" reasons. "When someone close to you is in the hospital, you want to be nearby," says Fitzwater. He stayed nearby for

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five days without being summoned. When Reagan left the hospital July 20, he was greeted by aides and their families at the White House, but not by Bush. The vice president had gone to Maine to see his grandchildren and to do some fishing. At the moment Reagan arrived, Bush, Vic Gold, and a reporter for *The Boston Herald* were dangling their lines from the vice president's boat, *Fidelity*. They didn't get a single bite all day.

FRED BARNES

The perils of moving toward freedom.

GUINEA'S WORTH

IT WAS NEWS, 16 months ago, when Guinea's president, Ahmed Sékou Touré, then black Africa's longest-ruling head of state, died on the operating table at a Cleveland hospital. It was news, a few days later, when the military took power in Guinea, in a bloodless coup. Then Guinea vanished from the news, until just three weeks ago, when its current president, Col. Lansana Conte, defeated a bloody coup attempt led by his former prime minister, Col. Diarra Traoré. Conte was threatening to execute Traoré and his co-conspirators. He said that anyone who wanted to intercede on their behalf in the name of human rights "had better do it today, because tomorrow may be too late." The prevailing impression left by the half-dozen or so news reports was of some feud between two equally ruthless characters.

In fact, the man who said those words has been leading his nation out of a dictatorship and toward a more open society, in one of the most promising political developments in Africa for a long time. His bloody threat illustrates not just what it takes for a small African country to attract interest in the United States, but the unexpected difficulties of leading a nation toward freedom. This second lesson is one with applications in places that get more attention in the United States, such as Central and South America.

After Sékou Touré's death it was remarkable how quickly and smoothly the military came to power. The regime had long been exhausted and was unable to survive the strongman who kept it together. The Democratic Party of Guinea, the country's only political party, which boasted about its presence in every corner, seemed to have vanished along with its impressive white uniforms and revolutionary rhetoric. Power fell into the hands of the military like a rotten fruit.

Sékou Touré had started his rule as one of the legendary figures of Africa's independence, a man whose name was once pronounced in the same breath as those of Nehru, Tito, and Nasser. Guinea was the only French colony to choose independence rather than a new form of association with France; Sékou Touré was the leader who in 1958 persuaded his people to vote no in the referendum proposed by Charles de Gaulle. Infuriated, the French government reacted by completely withdrawing from Guinea and denying all assistance to the former colony. Sékou Touré stood as an embattled hero. There followed years of relative withdrawal from the international scene marked by clashes and rapprochements with powers from East and West. In the last period of his rule, Sékou Touré was attempting a comeback of sorts into the world arena. He was regarded in Rabat, Cairo, and Riyadh as a Pan-African and Islamic statesman and a respected mediator in regional conflicts. He paid state visits to West Germany, France, and the United States.

For the Guineans, though, his government brought the worst excesses of a one-party state and personalized dictatorship: corruption, inefficiency, personality cult, ethnic polarization, and, above all, political intolerance and implacable suppression of dissent. Thousands of Guineans were imprisoned and killed during his rule. Victimization reached deep into the families of those fallen from grace. Every aspect of the country's life was under tight surveillance. "Guinea prefers poverty in freedom to riches in slavery," Sékou Touré had declared with characteristic grandeur at the time of independence. After 26 years of rule he had given his people little more than poverty and oppression. Sékou Touré epitomized the noble dream turned sour in the tight cask of total power.

WHEN President Conte took power, he emphasized the need for national unity and ethnic harmony. He declared his government's objective to build a democratic society. He insisted on respect for human rights and the imperative of avoiding bloodshed. He limited the arrests to about 60 people, mostly top officers of the defunct regime, treated them humanely, and promised a fair investigation and trial. A year later, about half of them had been released.

Conte's task is formidable indeed, and his chances of success uncertain. After long years of dictatorship, Guinea has begun to breathe in the open. This can both cleanse festering wounds and arouse dormant ambitions, and Conte has recognized the delicacy of his undertaking. Having come to power backed by a multi-ethnic Military Committee of National Recovery, he must consolidate his presidential authority and avoid personalized rule and ethnic imbalances. He needs to modernize an inefficient economy and state apparatus while being mindful of the political effects of the International Monetary Fund's prescriptions (it has recommended a devaluation of the syli, Guinea's currency, and a drastic reduction of the civil service) and of the need to avoid the impression of widespread purges. He must deal firmly with subversion but respect human rights.

Conte's stewardship went through its first major test when Colonel Traoré, once his uneasy ally, staged a coup d'état. Traoré accused Conte of stalling over the necessary

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purges and economic reforms, but the widespread suspicion in Guinea was that it was a poorly veiled attempt at grabbing power. The coup was defeated and Conte was greeted with massive demonstrations of support and popular demands to act tough. Conte's threat to execute Traoré while anticipating—perhaps inviting—pleas of clemency from abroad illustrates the tensions he is experiencing. Human rights groups and friendly governments asked him to avoid summary trials or executions. On July 20 Conte announced that the rights of those involved in the coup would be respected, and that they would receive fair trials.

President Conte's experiment may be seen as a timely embodiment of an attitude growing in many parts of Africa: the rejection of a political model of strongman leadership and ideological rigidity in favor of more realistic and moderate politics. As such, its success or failure will have an enormous effect throughout black Africa.

Yet its chances of seriously attracting the attention of the United States's foreign policy machinery are dim. First, although the influence of the United States in many African countries has come to equal if not surpass that of the former European metropolises, the region is still not seen as a natural sphere of influence or partnership in the way, say, that Latin America is. More important, perhaps, Guinea does not meet the Reagan administration's main criterion for foreign policy priorities in the Third World: it is not immediately relevant to the U.S.-Soviet struggle for influence in the Third World. Angola is. Chad, to a lesser extent. (France plays a more direct role there.) South Africa would not be, but it has come to the fore of U.S. foreign policy concerns nevertheless, through the back (and wider) door of public opinion pressure. It is sad that some of the most encouraging political tides in the Third World are manifesting themselves at a time when U.S. foreign policy vision is so narrow.

JOSÉ ZALAQUETT

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Why Daddy took the T-Bird away.

SOUNDS OF SEX

"GOOD GOLLY MISS MOLLY!" Little Richard howled with glee. It was 1959, and the self-proclaimed "Queen of Rock 'n' Roll" was hellaciously flinging a truth at America. "When you're rockin' and rollin' / You can't hear your mama call!" Pop music's first sexually ambiguous superstar wasn't singing about dancing with Molly at the sock-hop, and this was no secret to outraged PTAs, church groups, and high school principals across the country. They burned his records; song after song of his went gold. Mama lost that round, and nearly every one since.

NOW A NEW WAVE of concern over the attitudes espoused in rock music is gathering strength, triggered by the raunchiness of today's pop songs and the blatant sexuality of accompanying videos. A group calling itself the Parents' Music Resource Center has set up shop in posh offices in downtown Washington, D.C., its mission "to get the music world to clean up its act." The PMRC is trying to spark a nationwide "Media Watch" to "monitor radio and TV stations consistently for a period of time" and "record the objectionable words/songs/scenes." They want record companies voluntarily to label contemporary songs and albums with a ratings system similar to the one Jack Valenti set up for films 17 years ago.

Last year the national PTA sent letters to 32 record companies asking that rock music be clearly labeled for sexual content or profanity, but its plea was ignored. What makes the PMRC different is its well-connected leadership. Mary Elizabeth "Tipper" Gore (wife of Senator Albert Gore), Susan Baker (wife of the treasury secretary), and Pam Howar (wife of a Washington construction firm magnate) are the high-profile officers of the fledgling group. Money does not seem to be a problem. In a bizarre twist, the initial funding for the effort came from the Love Foundation, a charitable organization set up by the Beach Boys after the death from a drug overdose of their drummer Dennis Wilson in 1983.

Though it was founded just a little over three months ago, the PMRC has already received a lot of attention. *Newsweek*, *The Washington Post*, *U.S. News & World Report*, and National Public Radio have featured the group, and Phil Donahue pegged it for one of his on-the-air debates. In June the Justice Department's new commission on pornography heard PMRC testimony on "porn rock," and a special presentation documenting the transgressions of pop singers has been pitched to influential senators. Fearing the worst—there's talk of congressional hearings in the fall—the president of the National Association of Broadcasters alerted 800 station group owners to the high-powered lobbying effort. Through the potent combination of prestige, access, and cash, the new group has taken off.

"You can buy me a daiquiri / You can take me home and tear my clothes off," coos Terri Nunn of the trio Berlin. Lines like these, and far worse, are what have the Washington activists so agitated. They've listened with excruciating attention to the pop music scene, and are shocked at what they've heard. "You ought to see the file-card index I have of these kinds of things," Pam Howar, the group's president, told me. "It's endless."

The pop star who seems to shock everyone is Prince, one of the biggest names in rock history, and a very strange young man. Prince helped change the nature of romantic lyrics in pop music—he's a master of the single entendre. "Head," a dance tune from his third album,

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Dirty Minds, has nothing to do with sports equipment. On "Jack U Off," he indelicately, if rather politely, makes the eponymous offer,"If you're tired of masturbating . . . / If you like I'll jack u off." But the song that has parents most outraged is "Darling Nikki," from the Grammy and Oscar award-winning album *Purple Rain* (ten million copies sold), which has a verse that goes, "I knew a girl named Nikki / I guess you could say she was a sex fiend. / I met her in a hotel lobby / Masturbating with a magazine. / She said 'how'd u like to waste some time?' / And I could not resist when I saw / Little Nikki grind."

This is pretty strong stuff for ten-year-olds, and Prince doesn't stop there. Oral sex, incest ("My sister never made love with anyone but me / Incest is everything it's said to be"), and bisexuality are recurring themes in Prince's music. He has also written steamy songs for other singers. Sheena Easton's chart-topping "Sugar Walls" earned the wrath of many a mother with these lines: "The blood races to your private spots / Lets me know there's a fire / Can't fight passion when passion is hot / Temperatures rise inside my sugar walls." The song went platinum (one million copies sold), and made Phil Donahue roll his eyes and say, "Not so funny, huh?"

But Prince has plenty of raunchy company. The thundering beat of heavy metal is now the biggest-selling sound in America, and it's pretty sick stuff. Judas Priest's platinum album, *Defenders of the Faith*, includes a song called "Eat Me Alive," a wimp's delight: "Squealing in passion as the rod of steel injects . . . gut-wrenching frenzy that deranges every joint. / I'm going to force you at gunpoint to eat me alive." Misogyny is a big part of the heavy metal world. It's a fantasy of unchecked, idiotic male power purveyed for its audience of working-class teenage white boys. "Burn, Bitch, Burn!" scream metal vets Kiss; "Gonna drive my love inside you / Gonna nail your ass to the floor / On your knees!" grunts Great White. This stuff sells by the zillions. All the young metal dudes like it; in fact, they're proud of it. At Twisted Sister concerts, Dee Snider leads the crowd in an endless chant of "I'M A SICK MUTHAFUCKA." Howar's condemnation of the metal scene as "very detrimental to bringing up a healthy generation of young people" could only be considered high praise by these guys.

IN FACT, most of the big hits of the past year or so have been scrutinized by the PMRC and denounced. "The pervasive theme in Top 40 music is loose sex," says Howar. "Even Bruce Springsteen isn't clean." "The Boss" to millions of mainstream rock fans, Springsteen hit the Top Ten this year with a song that sparked a controversy when a rumor got around that it told the story of a teenage rapist. "I'm on Fire" turned out to be simply about lust, but its harking back to the oldest Southern slang terms for lovers could have confused young fans: "Hey little girl is your Daddy home / Did he go and leave you all alone / I got a bad desire / Oh, I'm on fire." The rape rumor put the song on the naughty list; it also probably helped sales.

No rumor was needed to send concerned listeners through the ceiling when they heard Marvin Gaye's posthumously released album, *Dream of a Lifetime*. The hit track, "Sanctified Lady," was originally called "Sanctified Pussy" and describes the pleasures of getting down with a churchgoing woman. The message of "Masochistic Beauty" is loud and clear: "Get your ass in gear / Come closer here / See your passion sweat / Now it's wet / I'll jam you till you fight / I'll rock you till you're sore / Like a whore. . . . You nasty little slave, kiss my feet / Put your face right here and start to eat."

DO KIDS LISTEN to these words and behave accordingly? No one really knows. "This is an underestimated, under-researched area," says Howar. Yet the PMRC seems to have no doubts: "The music is definitely making an impression." The PMRC's "Rock Music Report" warns that "there appears [sic] to be five major themes that rock music returns to again and again: (1) Rebellion (2) Substance Abuse (3) Sexual Promiscuity and Perversion (4) Violence-Nihilism (5) The Occult." Pretty grim. The report declares that "the average teenager," that elusive creature, "listens to rock music an average of four to six hours daily!" The report totals that up and discovers that from grades seven through 12 the typical teen has the Walkman strapped on for 10,560 hours; she only listens to her teachers for 11,000 hours.

But the PMRC list could just as well be describing primetime America, from *Miami Vice* to *Dynasty* to the latest sorority-girls-as-budding-witches schlock TV movie. Rock music has to be viewed in the larger context of American pop culture; Madonna's sex kitten persona is really just a cheekier version of a Charlie's Angel.

If Marvin Gaye changed from the 1960s when he teamed with Tammi Terrell to sing sweet love songs like "Your Precious Love" and "Ain't No Mountain High Enough," so has the country. Sex sells in America, and as the advertising world has grown ever more risqué in pushing cars, cosmetics, jeans, and liquor to adults, pop music has been forced further past the fringes of respectability for its rebellious thrills. When mom and dad watch a Brut commercial in which a nude woman puts on her husband's shirt and sensuously rubs his after-shave all over herself, well, what can a young boy do? Play in a rock 'n' roll band and be a bit more outrageous than his parents want him to be. Kids' natural anti-authoritarianism is going to drive them to the frontiers of sexual fantasy in a society where most aspects of the dirty deed have been appropriated by racy advertising and titillating TV cheesecakery. The country has rotted, and rock music is simply taking the decay to its scarifyingly logical conclusion.

Trying to put a curb on all this smut by labeling some albums fit for teens and others fit only for weirdos, as the PMRC is proposing, would be unwieldy at best, and counterproductive and hypocritical at worst. "We're talking about truth in packaging here," says Susan Baker. "This is a consumer issue." The group is asking that record compa-

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nies prominently display all lyrics, unobscured by design, right on the record sleeves. They want a national system of ratings, preferably administered by the record industry itself but if not then perhaps through the courts or Congress. They want to regulate album covers, putting the randier ones in separate sections of music stores, or behind the counter. They want radio stations to change programming policies, banning some songs deemed by community groups as too sleazy, airing others only late at night.

What effect would these policies have? Some kids, undoubtedly, would not hear some songs. But most would probably be tempted to get their ears into the music their parents think is most dangerous, and the tunes themselves might get raunchier under the cover of an R or X rating. Besides, many rock musicians, including Prince, already prominently display dirty lyrics; it helps sales. Independent labels and stations would sprout up offering unfettered rock 'n' roll to the sizable market that would demand it.

The outcry over pop music happens periodically, spurred by a new sound or sensation, in this case the rise of videos and their cheap T&A titillation. Some of the concerned activists might find the lines "And if you don't wanna smell my smoke / Don't monkey with my gun" too blue for airplay. But they were written in 1931 by country music legend Jimmy Rodgers, at a time when *Variety* refused to list songs by Gene Autry and others because their titles were too suggestive. "Hoochie Coochie Man" is not about a guy who tickles babies. The blues classic "I'm Gonna Shave You Close," one of the kinkiest songs ever put on vinyl, is enough to inspire envy among today's raunchiest rock stars. In fact, the new sleaze in rock can be seen as a return to the blues and R&B explicitness that the first white rockers cleaned up, while stealing the sounds and inflections of the music for a middle-class audience. "The Lady Is a Tramp" and "Let's Do It" could be titles of Prince songs, except that Prince would describe "it" in the first verse. Cole Porter might be more clever than Prince, but his basic message is no more virtuous. That's one of the reasons why he was popular too.

The difference—and it's an important difference—is that today's salacious lyrics are not the exception to otherwise generally respected sexual standards and community values, but a symbol of their collapse. Still, it's absurd for would-be censors to hold a magnifying glass to the words when it's the music itself that arouses people. There's something sexy in the pure pulse of a rock song.

In 1963 the Federal Communications Commission ran an exhaustive, month-long investigation of "Louie, Louie." The Kingsmen's sultry gem was banned from the airwaves in Indiana and elsewhere because people were convinced they heard an obscenity buried in Jack Ely's suggestive mumbling. After playing it backward and forward at 78, 45, and 33 rpm, the FCC came to a conclusion: "The song is unintelligible at any speed." It sold eight million copies.

TERENCE MORAN

Who's sending our kids to Moscow?

REDFEST '85

VETERANS of the student movement of the 1950s and 1960s will remember the communist-sponsored World Youth Festivals of a generation ago. Thousands of youth from around the world were drawn by the call to unite in the struggle for peace and against American foreign policy. Now a new crop of student youth leaders is being invited by the World Federation of Democratic Youth to the first youth festival to be held in Moscow since 1957. Its theme: "The friendship of young generations can bring peace among nations." An estimated 25,000 to 30,000 young people will be attending from July 27 to August 5. The official American delegation will include among its 300 members Jesse Jackson Jr. and Brenda King, the daughter of Martin Luther King Jr.

The youth festivals have always been stronger on indoctrination and intimidation than on fostering messages of world peace. At the 1957 festival in Moscow an American festival organizer honored Nikita Khrushchev when he passed by him at the reviewing stand by lowering the American flag he carried. At Vienna in 1959 some anticommunist students were viciously attacked. Michael Harrington, then a young socialist activist, wrote in his autobiography, *Fragments of the Century*, "I saw the festival organizers turn goons loose on the dissidents." Meanwhile, "In the stadium, the Russian delegation released 'peace parachutes' when it entered; everyone had to rise, and the crowd changed rhythmically, hypnotically, *Mir y Drujba, Paix et amite*. It was my first totalitarian rally and it reminded me of the newsreels I had seen of Hitler at Nuremberg."

Given this history, why have a number of prominent Americans lent their names to the effort by the American Communist Party to build an American delegation to the current festival? The initial list of supporters included an unsurprising mix of left-wing political groups and longtime fellow travelers. But in the last few months a host of more prestigious endorsements have been announced by the National Preparatory Committee, including: Representatives George Crockett and John Conyers of Michigan, Major Owens of New York, Gus Hawkins and Ron Dellums of California, Pat Shroeder of Colorado, Parren Mitchell of Maryland, and Mickey Leland of Texas. The festival committee and the communist *Daily World* have also listed as supporters Mayors Andrew Young, Dianne Feinstein, Gus Newport, and Wilson Goode; and John Kenneth Galbraith, Jesse Jackson, and Coretta Scott King. In addition the committee has obtained institutional endorsements from the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, the U.S. Student Association, Operation Push, Clergy and Laity Concerned, and political bodies such as the Massachusetts State House of Representatives, the Cleveland City Council, and the New York City Council.

Some deny they ever gave permission for the use of their

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names. Others say that they did not fully understand what they were endorsing. Feinstein, Goode, Shroeder, Leland, and Galbraith all vigorously deny that they in any way support the festival, its goals, or American participation. (The committee nevertheless is still using all of their names to gather support.) Reached in Switzerland, Galbraith explained that he had responded to a letter sent under the name of Pete Seeger, which he said spoke in vague terms about youth getting together for international understanding. "I responded, as I have in the past," Galbraith said, "to what seemed a useful exchange program with the Soviets, the kind of civil communication I have always supported."

It is true that the brochure sent by the "National Preparatory Committee" to potential supporters is purposefully cryptic. It claims the festivals are initiated by an international body of "national and international youth and student organizations" that includes the YMCA International, World Student Christian Federation, All-African Student Union, and the International Union of Socialist Youth. It does not mention that the Young Communist League is the force behind the official organizing group in the U.S. In fact, one of the co-chairs of the U.S. delegation is former YCL leader James Steel. Still, Galbraith's impression that what was being proposed was a "useful exchange program," is disturbing. He said that he was unaware of the history and purpose of the international youth festivals. Some of the others, apparently, were equally unaware. (One of the highlights of this year's festival will be a trial of the United States and Israel for crimes against the Arab people.) Their naïveté is not unlike that of many politicians and intellectuals in the 1930s who failed to grasp the full moral implications of Soviet-style communism.

Mayor Feinstein's press secretary, Bill Strawn, insists that she did not in any way support the Moscow youth festival, but believed she was endorsing a marathon to raise funds for community basketball. Yet in April she signed a proclamation endorsing a basketball marathon held to raise funds to send Bay Area delegates to Moscow.

OTHER POLITICIANS, far from denying their support, have publicized it. Representative Crockett spoke at a meeting of the NPC and announced that his office would send two delegates to the festival. He then introduced a resolution in the House sending greetings to the Moscow gathering. Mayor Young declared May 21 World Youth Festival Day in Atlanta. Tom Offenberger, Young's press spokesman, confirmed that though Young did not formally endorse the festival, he "encouraged young people who desired to go to actually attend."

Last spring Mayors Wilson Goode of Philadelphia and Harold Washington of Chicago issued proclamations welcoming delegations of young people from eight festival preparatory committees (El Salvador; Greece; "Palestine"; West Germany; Vietnam; Nicaragua; the USSR; and the African National Congress) when they toured the United States. Washington praised the festival and said that Chicago would be sending a representative. The Palestinian member of this festival committee, Basem El Masry, spoke of what one report termed "the struggles of youth in the Israeli-occupied territories of Gaza and the West Bank." The Salvadoran representative attacked the "puppet" Duarte government, which he accused of responsibility for the assassinations of some who had attended the last youth festival, held in Havana in 1978.

One of the co-chairs of the U.S. delegation is Julian Epstein, the legislative assistant to Representative John Conyers. He is attending the festival as the official representative of Conyers's office. Returning from a planning meeting in Moscow, Epstein was quoted as telling *The Daily World* that "certainly everybody has somewhat of an allegiance to their own country, but that's not the important thing. The overriding theme is peace and human rights and human dignity." His few days there convinced him that the Russians weren't "just enigmatic faces from another planet that have totally warped value systems," and that he had learned not to try and understand the Soviet Union "by simply reading *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times* and the other magazines."

Epstein said that the U.S. delegation intended to raise the issue of Soviet opposition to human rights, whether it be the treatment of Andrei Sakharov or the suppression of Solidarity. But he appeared torn about Afghanistan, saying he wasn't sure what the issues were. The critical issue, he emphasized, is the need to settle the arms race so as to avoid a nuclear war. Still, whatever Epstein's intentions, it is doubtful that anti-Soviet resolutions will be passed at the festival. As NPC treasurer Tom Hopkins put it, resolutions are "not an important part of the festival. . . . We think it best to avoid these kinds of divisive resolutions."

Other supporters of the festival are not concerned that it will condemn the United States. Representative Owens said that the dangers of nuclear war are so serious that it does not matter if the festival endorsed Soviet foreign policy. Brenda Davenport, youth director of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and an NPC co-chair, said that she and other civil rights-oriented delegates were primarily concerned with resolutions on racism and apartheid. Davenport said, "We're sure it's controlled by the communists, but they're reaching out to people like us."

In retrospect, Galbraith said, Seeger's solicitation of support "could have stood a close second look." After expressing his regrets, he quipped that "I trust the attending students and the Republic will survive." No doubt they will. But major American politicians and intellectuals should know that neither the cause of peace and friendship nor the legitimate criticism of U.S. policies is served by endorsing a propaganda show celebrating the cause of international communism.

HARVEY KLEHR AND RONALD RADOSH

Harvey Klehr, the author of *The Heyday of American Communism*, is Samuel Candler Dobbs Professor of Politics at Emory University. Ronald Radosh, the coauthor of *The Rosenberg File*, is a professor of history at the City University of New York.

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America's strangest welfare program.

A DISABILITY PRIMER

ON MARCH 30, 1981, John Hinckley Jr. tried to assassinate President Reagan outside the Washington Hilton Hotel. Among those struck by stray bullets was 45-year-old Thomas Delahanty, a D.C. policeman. Delahanty underwent emergency surgery to remove a bullet lodged inches from his spinal cord; it was touch and go for a while, but he recovered nicely. In November he was granted early retirement on the grounds that he had been permanently disabled as a result of his wound. The D.C. police and fire retirement board won't say exactly what was still ailing Delahanty, but a *Washington Post* article alluded to "nerve damage to his left arm." In any case, he now collects a tax-free, inflation-adjusted annuity equal to two-thirds of his old salary. After taxes, this is more than he would be making if he were still working. The average D.C. police disability annuity last year was $27,125—tax-free. The law allows Delahanty to continue collecting his annuity while working at a nonpolice job, as long as his earnings don't exceed 80 percent of what he was making on the force.

In 1978 Juan Gutierrez of Miami, a 56-year-old man with a serious heart condition, applied for Social Security Disability Insurance benefits. A board of examiners determined that he was so disabled that he couldn't risk working at any job, and Gutierrez began receiving regular checks from the U.S. Treasury. He subsequently suffered two more heart attacks. What's more, his hands are deformed by arthritis, and he has high blood pressure. But in January 1984 the Social Security Administration reviewed his file and informed him that he was judged fit to work. His benefits would be cut off in four months. According to a statement Gutierrez submitted to a federal court in Florida, his blood pressure went up, yet he was forced to cut back on medicine in order to save money. His distraught wife was hospitalized. "I believe my wife and I will die from this terrible experience," Gutierrez told the court.

Delahanty and Gutierrez have both been legally determined to be "disabled." Yet they have very different medical conditions, and fared very differently at the hands of government authorities. Their situations illustrate the often contradictory workings of one of our nation's largest and most expensive benefit systems: disability retirement. Almost everyone agrees that we should do something to help people who become too sick or injured to work. But America's disability system is a hodgepodge of federal, state, and local programs with wildly varying eligibility criteria and benefit levels. Some sick and injured people fare nicely under this system. Others get stiffed. Although there have been periodic outcries over the system's high cost and inequity, it's never undergone a successful overhaul.

Disability programs fall into three categories. Some pay workers an indemnity for injuries on the job or in the line of duty (worker compensation, police and fire pensions, veterans' pensions, and federal black-lung programs). Others pay disabled people who are also financially needy (the chief example is Supplemental Security Income). Still others pay what amount to insurance benefits for early retirement due to disability (Civil Service and military pensions, Social Security Disability Insurance, railroad retirement, state and local public employee pensions). Disability benefits are generally tax-free; many go up automatically with inflation.

THE SIZE of the disability system can only be guessed at. According to a 1982 study by the Congressional Budget Office, the total cost of public sector disability programs grew from $6.3 billion in 1965 to $37.1 billion in 1980. A 1983 study by the Employee Benefits Research Institute calculated that the total number of recipients was about six million in 1978, almost triple the 1965 level. As these figures suggest, America went on something of a disability binge in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Growth was most spectacular in the largest program, Social Security Disability Insurance. When Congress created SSDI in 1956, it estimated that by 1980 it would be paying $859 million a year to one million beneficiaries. But the program surpassed that projection in the early 1960s; in 1984 SSDI transferred $17.7 billion to 3.8 million Americans.

An inherent problem in the system is that no one can define disability with scientific objectivity. A doctor can tell you the name of an individual's disease, but he can't always tell you if the disease makes it impossible for the person who has it to work. "We put doctors in a bind," says Tom Joe of the Center for the Study of Social Policy. "They say, 'Yeah he's disabled, but I don't know what the hell he can do.' Or, 'This clod, forget it, keep him at home.' Others say, 'Baloney, I've seen quadriplegics who can hold down full-time jobs.' " People often claim to be disabled by chronic pain in their legs or back. But the only evidence of pain—the complaints of the claimant himself—is subjective. In 1984 Congress set up a National Commission on Pain to investigate this perplexing question.

So every disability program makes do with its own set of eligibility criteria, each with a different method for taking into account such nonmedical factors as a claimant's skills, experience, and education. Veterans' compensation, for example, uses a complicated rating system that tries to correlate service-connected disabilities with putative losses of earnings potential. An ulcer makes you ten percent disabled, while a lost leg or blindness will get you 100 percent. Federal workers have to show they can't do their present jobs or anything like it within commuting distance. Black-lung claimants have to prove they can no longer work in mining or other comparable jobs. Would-be recipients of SSDI have to meet the most demanding test: they must be unable to work at "any substantial gainful activity" anywhere in the economy. Two claimants

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may have the same illness or injury, but because of the way SSDI factors in experience and education, one might receive benefits and the other be considered ineligible. What's more, although SSDI is completely funded by the federal government, it is administered by state boards, so standards vary from place to place. In 1984, 54.6 percent of SSDI applicants in South Dakota were awarded benefits, but only 27.6 percent in Illinois.

Benefits also vary from program to program, and sometimes the easier a program is to qualify for, the more it pays. Hence the differing fortunes of Delahanty and Gutierrez. In fiscal 1983 federal workers and military retirees each got average benefits of over $700 a month. Both are permitted to augment their pensions with substantial amounts of income from work. Veterans who are considered 100 percent disabled can get as much as $1,295 a month, and veterans with certain severe disabilities can get up to $3,697 per month. Disabled vets are allowed to work without losing all their benefits, and many receive extra money for their dependents. Disabled workers on SSDI get an average of $458 a month. Meanwhile, black-lung victims receive flat payments that range from $328 for single miners to $656 a month for miners with three kids or more; and there is no regular COLA. Both SSDI and black-lung beneficiaries face strict rules on how much they can work without losing their benefits.

Not surprisingly, the lack of a uniform standard opens the system up to flagrant malingering. In the 1970s a Prince George's County, Maryland, police chief with an allegedly crippling back injury took a $29,700 disability pension and went looking for another police job in Florida. In 1982 *The Boston Globe* revealed that lucrative disability retirement benefits were being granted to high-level city employees on dubious grounds. One of Mayor Kevin White's old pals, Bobby Toomey, had a car accident to which the only witnesses were his best friends, faked a back injury, and was awarded $30,000 a year for life. Another former official applied for $28,800 a year because of "nightmares relating to City Council meetings gone out of control."

SUCH CHEATING ASIDE, economists generally believe that the availability of disability benefits, especially SSDI, has caused many people to leave the labor force who otherwise would have chosen to work. This is suggested by the fact that the programs grew so rapidly during the 1960s and 1970s, a time when the overall health of American workers did not noticeably deteriorate. Explanations vary for the boom in SSDI during this time. Part of the reason was that many workers, particularly older blue-collar men, began to notice that they could replace a high percentage of their previous income by going on SSDI. Perhaps influenced by a general shift in the zeitgeist, which took away some of welfare's stigma, disability determiners became softer touches than they had been before. This opened the door to people like Hershal Bloodworth of Atlanta. Recently he told a House committee that SSDI declared him disabled in 1972 solely on the basis of a "nervous breakdown" he claimed he suffered in Vietnam in 1968.

We seem to have averted the disability "crisis" that was predicted in a staff report by Jimmy Carter's Office of Management and Budget in 1979. Growth in SSDI leveled off considerably at the end of the 1970s. The Social Security Board of Trustees now estimates that there's little chance that the system will run out of money, as once was feared. Meanwhile, some of the more notoriously lax programs have been tightened up. Thanks to tougher standards imposed by the Reagan administration, the annual rate at which federal retirees joined the disability rolls fell from 23 percent in 1980 to 12 percent in 1983. Benefits, though still high, have stopped growing. There's also some evidence that state and local programs aren't as bad as they used to be. The Massachusetts system was reformed after the Bobby Toomey scandal broke in the *Globe*. And the glory days of the late 1960s, when 99 percent of D.C. policemen and fire fighters used to retire on disability, are gone forever; last year only 12 percent retired on disability.

Still, none of this is any cause for complacency, for two reasons. First, the hallmark of the disability system has always been its unpredictability. According to historian Edward Berkowitz of George Washington University, SSDI's long-run costs in 1979 were twice as much as Social Security had predicted in 1967, but much less than it had predicted in 1977. If economic conditions change more drastically than anyone has been able to foresee, the solvency of the system could become doubtful again. Second, it just doesn't make sense to tolerate the system if cheaper, more equitable alternatives can be found.

THE HUGE SSDI program must be trimmed—but with a scalpel, not a meat ax. The Reagan administration tried the latter, and it didn't work. Armed with a General Accounting Office report that claimed that 20 percent of all SSDI recipients were really ineligible and a 1980 law that instructed the Department of Health and Human Services to reevaluate people on the SSDI rolls, the administration moved on SSDI within months of the 1981 inauguration. Its goal was two billion dollars' worth of savings. Between March 1981 and December 1983, HHS reviewed 1.2 million disability cases, and lopped 476,000 people off the rolls. The HHS malingerer-hunters hit some legitimate targets, but many of the review proceedings were dubious, hurried affairs whose results were later nullified on appeal. There was outrage on Capitol Hill, which was flooded with mail from disabled constituents. There was also chaos within the state-run lower ranks of the SSDI bureaucracy, which weren't equipped to handle the huge volume of cases. Dozens of states simply refused to go along with the process.

When the dust had settled, SSDI had become *more* expensive. The main result of the administration's crackdown was to provoke a huge bipartisan majority in Congress to pass a law that requires the government to show "medical improvement" in an SSDI recipient's condition

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before kicking him off the rolls. This will make it much more difficult to remove anyone in the future, and will add $1.4 billion to the program's cost over the next five years. The number of disabled workers on the rolls is once again growing rapidly.

A wiser way to tackle the program would have been to continue enforcing tough standards on new applicants and increasing reviews at a more manageable rate. One step that would probably eliminate a lot of the inequity and inefficiency of SSDI now would be to take responsibility for determining disability from state authorities and give it to the federal government, which already pays for this part of the system and handles the rest of SSDI. A Social Security court, modeled on the tax courts, would relieve federal district courts of the countless disability suits. CBO estimates that making federal workers meet the same tough disability standards as SSDI beneficiaries would help save almost a billion dollars by 1990. Cutting all benefits to veterans with disability ratings of 30 percent or less, most of whom can work anyway, and eliminating payments to dependents of vets with ratings below 50 percent would remove 1.3 million basically healthy people from the dole—and save $7.4 billion over the next five years. A 1981 "megacap" law prohibits anyone from earning more than 80 percent of pre-retirement income by receiving benefits from more than one federal disability program. But Congress exempted recipients of veterans' compensation. Ending this special break would save millions. And why should disability benefits be tax-free? Poor people don't pay taxes anyway.

But reform will never really be complete until we devise a better definition of disability. No definition can avoid being subjective, but we could look for ones that are more consistent with modern notions of what the disabled can do. Why, at a time when more of the disabled are demanding access to jobs, and when the federal government is spending two billion dollars on programs to help the handicapped work, are we also spending billions on SSDI? We should concentrate more on testing what someone can actually do, considering his age, abilities, motivation, and the obstacles he faces in the environment. More realistic and consistent standards could ensure that disability benefits go to people who really need them.

CHARLES LANE

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It's time to stop exporting Adam Smith to Tokyo. Let Japan be Japan.

ZEN AND THE ART OF TRADE NEGOTIATION

BY ROBERT KUTTNER

THE REAGAN administration and most free-trade advocates believe that if Japan would just open its home markets to America, pressure would subside to close America's markets to Japan. Diplomacy has proceeded accordingly. Following the Reagan-Nakasone summit last January and America's repeal of the Japanese auto quota, a new round of talks began, aimed at exporting Adam Smith to Tokyo. Trade experts believe that liberalization of Japan could increase sales of U.S. goods by ten billion dollars to $15 billion a year.

Since January the Japanese government has announced market-opening initiatives almost daily. But every apparent Japanese concession seems to be accompanied by a new increase in the trade deficit. As legal barriers fall, commercial obstacles rise. As fast as Japanese bureaucrats are reeducated, Japanese merchants resist. As trade associations are won over, consumers balk. "Behind every door," complains Senator Jack Danforth, chairman of the trade subcommittee, "is another door." And the nearly universal view among U.S. business leaders in Japan and U.S. diplomats speaking privately is that the new Japanese measures will prove as slippery as past concessions.

American public opinion, meanwhile, is hardening into two camps. One holds that the trade imbalance is all our fault—our bloated dollar, our dismal savings rates, our shoddy products. The other blames Japan's diabolically effective mercantilism. Congressional Democrats recently filed legislation imposing a 25 percent tariff surcharge against Japan and three other trade surplus nations if the imbalance is not reduced by June 1986. Both views contain pieces of truth, but both finally miss the point. The real story of the trade impasse is the U.S. government's failure to accept the distinct character of Japan's consensual, managed economy, and to negotiate accordingly.

A little history: a decade ago Japanese protectionism was overt. Tariffs were exorbitant. Priority industries,

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such as steel, simply excluded imports outright. Foreign businesses were required to operate joint ventures with Japanese partners. In industries like semiconductors, where Japan was playing catch-up, Americans could sell in Japan only on condition that they license patents to Japanese competitors. In a heavily regulated society, Japanese manufacturers could get necessary product certifications in advance, at the factory. Foreign producers had their goods inspected, one at a time, on the Yokohama docks.

After a decade of diplomatic assault, Japan has dismantled many of these explicit barriers. Japanese mercantilism has simply retreated into the social fabric. In the late 1970s, when barriers were flagrant, the trade deficit was under ten billion dollars. Today, after substantial legalistic progress, it is running at $48 billion.

IN LATE 1984, on the eve of the summit meeting with Prime Minister Nakasone, Reagan's cabinet debated a substantial hardening of the American position on trade. Some officials, notably U.S. Trade Representative William Brock and Commerce Secretary Malcolm Baldridge, pressed for some kind of "effects test," where the proof of progress would be a dramatic increase in U.S. market share, rather than endless bickering about Japanese regulations. However, the Departments of Treasury, State, and Defense, and the Council of Economic Advisers objected. Negotiating a particular market share would be embracing, rather than challenging, Japan's management of its markets. In the guise of selling laissez-faire, we would be conspiring in a form of economic planning. Even worse, such a hard line might jeopardize America's military bases.

So the U.S. concocted yet another round of talks on Japanese due process, aimed at liberalizing markets in four key sectors where U.S. products are thought competitive: telecommunications, electronics, pharmaceuticals and medical devices, and forest products. The U.S would continue to coax the Japanese to run their economy more in the American way; the free market would settle the outcome.

These new discussions have come to be known as the MOSS talks, which stands for "Market-Oriented, Sector-Specific." They are a search for the protectionist needles in the Japanese haystack, product by product, regulation by regulation, cartel by cartel. Cynics in the American Embassy say MOSS stands for More Of the Same Stuff. "The Japanese response to MOSS," says a Tokyo executive of a U.S. high-tech firm, "is to be a rolling stone."

For example, in telecommunications, where the U.S. is highly competitive in satellite technology, cellular radio, and high-cost interconnect equipment, we sold the Japanese $194 million worth of goods last year, and bought from them over two billion dollars' worth. The Nippon Telephone and Telegraph Company, formerly a state monopoly, was deregulated on April 1, Ma Bell-style. U.S. and Japanese negotiators then announced a reduction in the number of technical standards and other measures that ostensibly open the Japanese market. On the other hand, NTT has 80-year-old relationships with favored suppliers, and American producers do not expect much of a change. "Being allowed to bid," said an old Japan hand, "is not the same as making a sale." A ranking official of the Post and Telecommunications Ministry cautioned me that the U.S. might have difficulty selling American phones in Japan because "Japanese people are smaller."

In forest products, where the American comparative advantage is immense, U.S. suppliers already do substantial business with Japan, but the Japanese prefer to import raw timber rather than processed wood and paper products. "There is a sawmill in almost every Japanese legislative district," says a political analyst at the U.S. Embassy. The ruling Liberal Democratic Party is heavily dependent on rural "rotten boroughs," where Japanese forestry interests are powerful—Prime Minister Nakasone's own family is in the lumber business—and there has been no progress whatever in the MOSS talks on forest products.

Likewise in electronics, there have been procedural gains, but as the Japanese computer and semiconductor industry continues to mature, our share of the Japanese computer market continues to decline. Companies like Hitachi and Fujitsu make both the component (semiconductors) and the finished product (computers). Not surprisingly, they prefer to buy from themselves. The U.S., says Jack Osborne, chief of TRW in Japan, "is being reduced to a supplier of specialty products, while the Japanese have the mass markets." IBM, once the top computer seller in Japan, has dropped to third place, behind two domestic companies; Japanese computers are selling well in America. The bilateral trade balance in computers, which was positive as recently as 1981, is now negative by over two billion dollars a year.

The minutiae of the MOSS talks are numbing (some cynics say this is by design). Why do Japanese patent approvals take twice as long as American approvals? Will MITI accept certification from a foreign lab that is a for-profit company? What technical standards for computer software are reasonable, and how much of a role should U.S. companies have in setting them? Is a Japanese "recession cartel" (an anticompetitive form of market sharing) a legitimate economic development strategy or a restraint of trade? If MITI subsidizes applied research, can U.S. companies apply? In all of these negotiations, the U.S. operates at a systematic disadvantage, for our government is trying to get out of the business of managing markets, not into it. I asked the Commerce Department for statistics on U.S. market shares in Japan. They referred me to MITI. Although the U.S. and the Japanese publicly put a good face on the MOSS talks, a ranking U.S. negotiator says, "I'm very pessimistic about any real progress because we're asking them to change their entire system."

THE MOST ASTUTE Western students of Japan have long observed that it is a culture of reciprocity, whose highest ethic is social harmony. Where America champi-

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ons individual rights and legal entitlements, Japan is a subtle web of mutual obligation and ad hoc adjustment. Japan credentials just 500 lawyers a year. But the U.S.-Japanese trade negotiations, under American sponsorship, proceed as if they were seeking a Japanese version of the *Federal Register*, which once unearthed could be clarified, litigated, and purged of protectionist heresies.

Japanese managed capitalism—the writer Murray Sayle calls it "tribal bureaucratic capitalism"—very neatly fits Japanese society, with its emphasis on comity. For example, Japan has a law that gives local small retailers an effective veto over big chain stores locating in their neighborhoods. One effect of this is to assure the security of small merchants; another is to limit the number of outlets that sell foreign products. As a grand strategy, Japan discourages domestic consumption, and stimulates export products. It produces manufactured goods using efficient capital and few human workers, and then stashes the excess labor in archaic wholesaling systems and a grossly sheltered farm sector, all insulated from foreign competition. American economists find this economically irrational; they wonder why so nimble a nation would brook such inefficiency. But economically the system works, and socially it is Japan's equivalent of a welfare state. "Why should they change?" asks retired Lt. Gen. Lawrence Snowden, the president of Hughes Aircraft/Japan. "It's like asking an artist to destroy his masterpiece."

Clyde Prestowitz, the senior Japan specialist at the U.S. Department of Commerce, says, "When the Japanese sit down to negotiate market-opening measures, it doesn't occur to them that a recession cartel or a government-sponsored applied-research project might restrict trade. They just don't understand markets the way we understand markets."

Thus, while the Japanese keep dutifully fiddling with their formal rules to mollify the American lawyers, the deeper logic of their system remains stunningly intact. In all, there have been six major rounds of market-opening initiatives since 1982, but in that period the trade deficit has doubled. Stories abound of cases where legal obstacles were removed at great diplomatic effort, only to have de facto obstacles take their place. In the famous baseball bat case, U.S. negotiators bludgeoned the government of Japan to remove all the regulatory obstacles to American aluminum bats, but still the bats didn't sell. Just last month, a senior Japanese official solemnly explained that "your bats tend to be heavier and the grip is too thick for the Japanese."

UNTIL RECENTLY the Japanese state tobacco monopoly limited the number of kiosks where foreign cigarettes could be sold, and taxed imported cigarettes at a discriminatory rate. After much negotiation, these barriers were removed. But Japanese distributors are still convinced that their customers want only domestic tobacco, and nowhere in Tokyo did I see American cigarettes in a vending machine. The U.S. market share has soared from 1.4 percent all the way up to two percent.

Even the moves toward liberalization can mutate into new barriers. Now that Japan has relaxed the requirement that foreign firms operate through Japanese partners, many U.S. companies are buying out their Japanese associates. The Searle company invested ten million dollars in a new pharmaceutical plant in Kyushu, only to learn that the product certifications could not readily be transferred back to the parent company and that recertification would take three years. Searle has made a major stink about this—the company president is Donald Rumsfeld, former White House counselor and ex-ambassador to NATO. Searle may yet get its drug certifications as a special case, but Japan is not backing down on the principle.

UNFORTUNATELY, the American negotiating strategy to open these barriers is touchingly inept. In most diplomatic arenas, negotiations are based on quid pro quos. You give us A and we'll give you B. If you don't do X, we might be forced to do Y. But in the case of Japanese trade, the United States in effect has a laundry list of market-opening measures we'd like the Japanese to consider, out of loyalty to an ideal. "Our negotiating principle with the Japanese," says a despairing hard-liner, "is the golden rule. Change your system because we love you." Only on very rare occasions have U.S. negotiators linked Japanese objectives like fishing rights or quota liberalization to progress in opening Japan's own markets. The repeal of the auto quota, a fine bargaining counter, was given away. "We were just as happy to give it up," says a State Department official. "It made us feel guilty." If the negotiators employed a similar philosophy of one-sided initiatives in, say, the East-West arms talks, they would be run out of town as craven unilateralists.

Japan is not, of course, a sworn ideological and geopolitical enemy, like Russia, but an ally. In fact, in the narrowly military and geopolitical realms, Japan is about as splendidly abject an ally as a nation could desire. Here, after all, is the world's second strongest economy, with a strategically vital location, no designs on its neighbors, no assertive Gallic-style foreign policy, happy to vote with us in the U.N., pleased to contribute a billion dollars yearly to billet 60,000 U.S. troops, and quick to parrot (if not to practice) American homilies about free markets.

The result is that it doesn't occur to the White House that Japan might nonetheless be any kind of strategic threat. What kind of threat? Well, suppose Japan made its economic ideology explicit. Suppose the Japanese declared that American-style market liberalism was naive and that the Japanese brand of managed capitalism was a superior ideology. Japan, to be sure, is far too astute to preach that, but whose brand of capitalism do Korea, Taiwan, the Philippines, and for that matter China, emulate? Suppose the Japanese stridently declared they would "bury" us industrially, instead of just efficiently doing it.

While the White House keeps passing out Adam Smith ties and selling Japan more F-15s, those on the front lines of the trade negotiations are surprisingly candid about

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how America's ideological and military priorities undermine trade reciprocity. Clyde Prestowitz observes, "America wants a harmonious relationship with Japan, as a key member of the Western alliance. We think of trade policy not as an integral part of our grand strategy but as a handmaiden. We make unilateral trade concessions for the purpose of shoring up strategic, geopolitical objectives. For Japan, trade is the strategic objective."

Oddly, a prime American diplomatic goal in the Far East is that Japan dramatically increase defense spending above its present level of one percent of GNP. Japan has been grudgingly boosting its military budget (by 6.9 percent last year), and using this defense "concession" to avoid further trade concessions. This link is infuriating to liberal, outward-looking Japanese, who above all want Japan to open its borders and to steer clear of 1930s-style militarism. But in effect the U.S. is letting Japan delay opening its markets, so long as it is kind enough to re-arm. Some trade-off!

America's ability to conduct trade negotiations with the Japanese is also blunted by a terrible imbalance in intelligence. There are perhaps ten senior U.S. officials in Tokyo or Washington who speak good Japanese, but several hundred top Japanese trade officials with fluent English. Most former top U.S. trade officials are now working as lawyer-lobbyists for the Japanese. The reverse would be unthinkable. "When the U.S. negotiating position changes," says a trade specialist at the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo, "MITI often knows about it before we do." As an indication of the low strategic priority accorded trade negotiations, I was astounded to learn that most of the U.S. cable traffic and briefing books for the MOSS talks are unclassified. You can just walk in and eavesdrop on U.S. negotiating strategy.

MOREOVER, American officials, quick to project American liberal economic values onto Japanese corporatism, make the same error about Japanese politics. When different Japanese ministries play "nice cop/bad cop" with U.S. negotiators, this is mistakenly understood as Japanese pluralism. Ten different diplomats must have explained to me that Nakasone understands, but alas, he doesn't control the cabinet. Alternatively, officials will point out that MITI appreciates the importance of open markets, but can't persuade other ministries or business groups. "MITI," confided a U.S. businessman, "is really on our side." Ah, so.

The problem is not just an American problem. U.S. economists contend that as soon as the inflated dollar subsides, so will the bilateral trade deficit. However, blaming the dollar ignores the way the Japanese manage market shares in strategic industries. Last month, for example, the Semiconductor Industry Association filed a very convincing suit charging that the Japanese systematically limit the U.S. chip market in Japan, year in and year out, whether a dollar buys 190 yen or 320, while pursuing a predatory targeting and pricing strategy to dominate the U.S. market. American chip makers, who compete head-to-head with Japanese producers throughout the world, attain a 55 percent market share elsewhere, but some invisible hand holds them to a ten percent share in Japan. Meanwhile, the Japanese share of the U.S. market for the most advanced 256-k chips has grown to 92 percent.

As it turns out, Japan doesn't import many manufactured goods from anywhere, even from nations without overvalued currencies. Its worldwide trade surplus in manufactured goods was $122 billion last year. With an economy nearly half the size of ours, Japan takes only eight percent of the Third World's manufactured exports, while we take 53 percent—even though the same low-wage/high-tech nations that underprice America also increasingly underprice Japan. China complains that Japan is closed to textile exports. Korea can't sell Japan much steel. Malaysia wants to send processed wood, and Japan demands raw timber. Prying open Japan would be an immense service to the Third World. It would take some of the pressure off the U.S. to absorb Third World products, and it would give Third World producers more earnings with which to buy American products.

WHAT I AM PROPOSING here is this: rather than continuing a futile effort to out-lawyer Japan or to export American notions of economic liberalism to a corporatist society, it would be far better to let Japan be Japan. America and the other trading nations should simply insist that Japan open a share of its home markets to foreign imports, and let Japan figure out how. Japan, surely, is superb at brokering internal compromises and meeting targets. If Japan wants to continue its well-honed system of administered markets, recession cartels, applied-research subsidies, and so on, fine. Just buy some of our stuff too. Japan can import goods without importing Milton Friedman. "We have excellent trade relations with Rumania," says a U.S. diplomat, "but we don't make the mistake of thinking they believe in free markets. Maybe it's time to treat Japan like Rumania."

What is not reasonable is the expectation that we can make over Japan in our own image. If Commodore Perry couldn't accomplish that with gunboats, if General MacArthur couldn't manage it through a military occupation of a vanquished Japan, Ronald Reagan will not be able to do it during a period when Japan's system has emerged as the world-champion economy.

Reciprocity is not just another version of Japan-bashing. What really encourages the festering enmity toward Japan in Congress and the growing testiness in the trade talks is the unrealistic U.S. diplomatic stance, which denies the reality of Japanese mercantilism and allows the trade imbalance to widen. The industrial West desperately needs to devise a modus vivendi with Japan. Much about Japan is admirable: its productivity, its pacifism, its social comity, the purposive tranquillity of its daily life. Japan, above all, teaches that it is possible to be economically dynamic without intolerable social dislocation, a lesson the U.S. would do well to study, and apply. □

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STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

Against the Darkness

Imagine an English Ingmar Bergman born in 1947 instead of 1918, and *Wetherby* comes into view. It was written and directed by David Hare, born 29 years after Bergman, not only into an atmospherically altered world but into an artistic world where Bergman is significantly present. *Wetherby* is not imitation Bergman, but in its concerns and its methods it seems to me a scion. Like Bergman, Hare is hot for certainties in this our life, and like Bergman, he is by now quite prepared for dusty answers.

Wetherby
(MGM/UA Classics)

Through some of his plays, Hare is already known in this country. His most familiar play is *Plenty* (a film arrives later this year), which deals with the shriveling of purpose in postwar Britain. Its roots, though not all its branches, are political. *Wetherby* is not specifically political. It deals with the large-scale actions that can suddenly obtrude into small-scale lives, and with their surprising effects. Like Bergman—for example, in *Through a Glass Darkly* and *Winter Light*—Hare is using something like the chamber-play form to emphasize that, in the modern world, epic agony need not be visibly epic-size.

In a talk that Hare gave at King's College, Cambridge, in 1978, he referred to an episode in Hardy's *Jude the Obscure*. A young mother, impoverished, says in the presence of her oldest boy that it would be better if they had never been born. Later that day, she finds that the boy has hanged himself and his younger brother and sister. Hare commented:

> I always think that this is the ultimate cautionary tale for playwrights. That someone will take you at your word. That . . . your superbly played heroine [will] step harrowingly to the front of the stage and cry out in despair, "It is better that we had never been born," and there will in fact be an answering shot from the back of the stalls and one of the customers will slump down dead. . . .

Wetherby can almost be seen as an attempt to exorcise Hare's dread. A suicide occurs—a terrible, shocking enactment of despair—and our astonishment is in the relatively minor changes it causes in a witness's life.

A woman in her late 40s named Jean Travers teaches high school in Wetherby, a Yorkshire town near Leeds, and lives in a cottage in the country. To that cottage some of her friends come one evening for dinner, accompanied by a young man named John Morgan. He is uninvited, but Jean assumes he is a friend of her friends. Next afternoon Morgan visits her and casually admits that he simply barged in, pretending to be her friends' friend. Calmly seated before her, he puts a pistol in his mouth and blows his brains all over the wall behind him.

The film then follows three modes of movement: into what happened just before and during the previous evening, what happens after the suicide, and what happened 30 years earlier during Jean's first love affair. None of this is done to "solve" the suicide: it is meant to elucidate character and depict inner states of being.

The first of the prime chords, which turns out to be a tonal prophecy, is sounded at that dinner party and refers to someone we never even meet. One of the guests says about a woman who works with her: "Distant. . . . She doesn't really have a personality, she just has a way of suggesting to men that she'll be whatever they want her to be. Not a *person*, not a real person. . . ." (I'm quoting from the screenplay published by Faber and Faber.) Later, the inspector who is investigating the suicide says of Morgan: "A blankness. A central disfiguring blankness. That's what the people who knew him describe." Still later, Jean says of a young woman who knew Morgan at university (he had been a graduate student) and who is now staying with her: "I just can't get hold of her. . . . It's as if she's missing a faculty. She seems to say something. Then it just slips away. She has no curiosity." Clearly Hare is sampling what he takes to be an endemic inner numbness, which in most cases is borne without even complete awareness but which in some cases, as with Morgan, becomes so dark that it cannot be endured. And all this goes on in a world, mostly of somewhat older people, that carries on its vocations and chats and boozy coq-au-vin get-togethers with considerable spirit and a cynicism it rather enjoys.

Throughout the film, time is played with. Repetitions of scenes from different points of view or with ellipses filled, the continuing story in the present, many flashes far back into Jean's youth—all these are interwoven. Jean, in 1953, is having an affair with a young airman just before he leaves for Malaya. She is off to university. They plan to marry when he returns, but he is murdered out there (not killed in action). The present shows us: Jean's teaching, which is warm and vital; the police inspector's amorous difficulties, which tangentially touch his work on the suicide; the snitching on Jean, of an important detail, by one of her friends who is

FILMS WORTH SEEING

The Home and the World. East Bengal, 1907. Tagore's novel of interlocked changes in marriage and society, gently filmed by Satyajit Ray. (Reviewed 7/8/85)

The Shooting Party. Excellent acting, dialogue, production almost compensate for the pat symbolism of coming disaster. England, 1913. James Mason's farewell. (6/17/85)

Streetwise. This documentary, about young street people in Seattle, treats them with a cinematic skill that enhances the makers' compassion. (5/13/85)

Vengeance Is Mine. Playing in Chicago and at festivals, this grim story about a Japanese mass murderer explores the rationally irrational on the other side of morality. (7/29/85)

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a murder buff; her friendship, and it's no more than that, with her best friend's husband—a cozy, end-of-the-day, pub-drink friendship. (This husband, a solicitor, has the funniest speech in the film, about Margaret Thatcher, not irrelevant to the story.) And we see some scenes from Morgan's life before he appeared in Wetherby, though it's never explained why he chose to crash that particular dinner party.

This playing with time plays a bit of havoc with points of view. At first it seems Jean's story, present and past. When we go to other points of view, where she is not even present, the structure occasionally feels patched together. At any rate we soon understand that we are meant to see Jean moving through all these matters, close to her and less close, like a ship sailing through various seas. And we soon see that it is she who is the biggest mystery. *Nothing really happens to her.* She is far from the inner paralysis described in others—she is a fine teacher, a generous and spirited friend—but nothing happens to her. How the young Jean reacted to her lover's murder we never see or hear. What is it that the youthful affair and the murder are meant to have done to her? If those past events are the reasons she has never married, this is not made clear. (She certainly hasn't lost interest in men.) She seems to have defended herself well against troubles, against being gravely troubled. And she defends herself well against events of the present. One of her students asks her in simplistic—therefore unanswerable—terms about the value of education, then soon after runs off to London; yet Jean continues teaching with unshaken faith in its value. When she touches a man in sheer sexual desire and he takes it as a sign of empathy with his spiritual void, she denies this so strongly that it kills the sexual moment. Morgan blows his head off in front of her, and far from being devastated by this act, she keeps on pretty much as before, admitting only that she is "not in the pink." Three weeks after the suicide, she speaks of Morgan to the inspector:

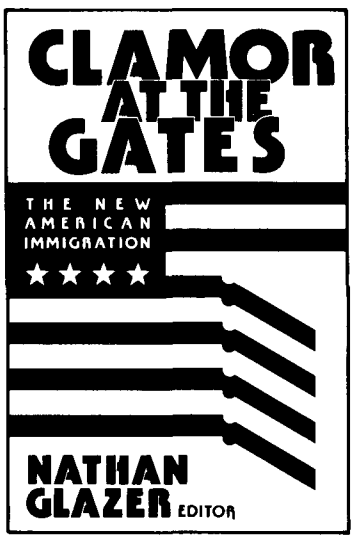
> Because I didn't know him, now I feel him dragging me down. I thought I could get over it. But everywhere now . . . the darkness beckons. These things become real. He wants me down there. . . . I've fought . . . I've fought for three weeks.

Evidently she wins the fight. Amid some other evidence is the last scene. She is back in the pub with her solicitor friend, as she was in the first scene, listening tolerantly while he speaks wryly.

Finally the mystery of Jean is not who she is: she seems a strong biological fact, a unit of intelligent Life Force ultimately impervious to discouragements that attack her and that she discerns in those around her. The mystery is: What are we supposed to think of her? Admirable? Solipsistic? Rightly strong? Gently ruthless? More important, because it's primary, what does Hare think of her? These questions are not answered.

So, at the last, *Wetherby* is unsatisfying, not because it doesn't finish in a conventionally tragic or poignant or reassuring way, but because it doesn't make demands on us in any cogent way. Because of the basic mystery—quandary—about Jean's character, the film doesn't trouble us enough. Everything is exquisitely drawn yet merely presented; and because of the film's structure, which is more intricate than modernist naturalism, we expect more than presentation—at least some telling disturbance. There is none. In this aspect, too, *Wetherby* is like the Bergman films cited earlier: the beauty of its making leads us to expect more demands than it makes.

Hare has directed many plays, his own and others, and two TV films. His handling of actors shows some influence of what Peter Hall has done in directing Pinter, as he fills pauses with invisible clenchings and makes silences integral. Hare's camera compositions, his economy, his creation of fullness by careful selection from a jumble of details, all these reflect Bergman. A few



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times I was puzzled by the way two people stare at each other, past ordinary behavior. I expected it to mean something, but it was always just staring. And some of the intercutting is heavy-handed. For instance, shots of the lover's murder and of Morgan's suicide are played against each other so blatantly, as examples of ugly life-taking, that the editing breaches the film's decorum.

The acting is past praise, therefore must be praised at least a little. Vanessa Redgrave is Jean. To put it negatively, she does nothing to diminish her stature as a great actress. I note only how deftly she touches in a Yorkshire accent. So does her daughter, Joely Richardson, who plays the younger Jean. Richardson has her own lovely face, yet she is clearly Redgrave's daughter. She has her own true talent, yet she is clearly Redgrave's daughter. Tim McInnerny, with a high white brow, acts Morgan in a vein that certifies what happens. Suzanna Hamilton, who was Julia in *1984*, is Morgan's university friend and plays like a blowtorch. Ian Holm, Jean's solicitor pal, once again fills a role so fully that we can't picture him as anyone else even though we know otherwise.

How Americans imagined the bomb they dropped.

THE CLOUD OVER THE CULTURE

BY PAUL BOYER

"HIROSHIMA." "Nagasaki." The very words, familiar to the point of banality but restlessly alive, remind us that we have yet to assimilate fully what they represent into our political, cultural, or moral history. "After the passage of nearly four decades and a concomitant growth in our understanding of the ever growing horror of nuclear war," declared the American Catholic bishops in 1983, "we must shape the climate of opinion which will make it possible for our country to express profound sorrow over the atomic bombing in 1945. Without that sorrow, there is no possibility of finding a way to repudiate future use of nuclear weapons. . . ."

Catholic bishops choose words with precision. Not remorse, not shame—only sorrow. Yet even that minimal standard seems beyond us. Peace activists will observe the anniversary of the bombing on August 6, but most Americans will ignore it, lapse into banalities about the distant beginnings of the "Atomic Age," or debate once again the well-worn political questions surrounding the decision to drop the bomb—important questions, to be sure, but so familiar that they have taken on a ritualized quality, in which every response to every point is known in advance.

The bishops are far from alone in concluding that we have failed as a people to come to terms with Hiroshima and Nagasaki. As early as 1946, Mary McCarthy described Hiroshima as "a kind of hole in human history." A few years ago I interviewed Ralph Lapp, the Manhattan Project physicist who later became a vigorous critic of the nuclear arms race. One of his comments was particularly striking: "If the memory of things is to deter, where is that memory? Hiroshima . . . has been taken out of the American conscience, eviscerated, extirpated."

To understand why, we must go back to the beginning. How did Americans first respond to the knowledge that official actions taken by their leaders had resulted in the instantaneous obliteration of two cities and the death of well over 100,000 human beings? In the public opinion polls, the approval ratings stood at about 85 percent, with what *Fortune* magazine called "a considerable minority of disappointed savagery" wishing that even more Japanese cities had been wiped out. A Wisconsin woman expressed her genocidal impulses in a letter to *The Milwaukee Journal*: "When one sets out to destroy vermin, does one try to leave a few alive in the nest? Certainly not."

At all levels of American culture, one senses an almost compulsive post-Hiroshima effort to trivialize the event and avoid its deeper implications. Radio comedians joked that America had given Japan "atomic ache" or that the bomb made Hiroshima look like "Ebbetts Field after a game between the Giants and the Dodgers." An *Atlanta Constitution* editorial cartoon picturing bodies flying into the air over Japan was wittily captioned "Land of the Rising Sons." *The New Republic*, ridiculing reports from Japanese sources of contamination by radiation in the destroyed cities, commented on September 24, 1945: "If radioactivity is present in the soil, such plants will be marked by an unusual number of sports and mutations. Here is the ideal job for Emperor Hirohito, an amateur geneticist. . . . Let him go to Hiroshima, sit among the ruins, and watch the mutations grow." By 1947 the Manhattan telephone directory listed 45 companies that had incorporated the magic word "atomic" in their names, among them the Atomic Undergarment Company. General Mills that year offered kiddies a genuine "Atomic 'Bomb' Ring" for 15 cents and a Kix cereal box top.

THERE WERE exceptions, of course, to this denial of the enormity of the event. From the first, some Americans reacted to Hiroshima and Nagasaki with dismay and anguish. "King Herod's slaughter of the innocents—an atrocity committed in the name of defense—destroyed no more than a few hundred children," a professor at Chicago Theological Seminary wrote in *Christian Century* magazine. "Today, a single atomic bomb slaughters tens of thousands of children and their mothers and fathers. Newspapers and radio acclaim it a great victory. Victory for what?" The poet Randall Jarrell wrote a friend in September 1945: "I feel so rotten about the country's response to the bombings at Hiroshima and Nagasaki, that I wish I could become a naturalized cat or dog." A somewhat unexpected voice of moral protest was that of David Lawrence, editor of the conservative magazine *United States News*. And in the black press, W. E. B. DuBois, Langston Hughes, Walter

Paul Boyer, Merle Curti Professor of History at the University of Wisconsin, is the author of *By the Bomb's Early Light: American Thought and Culture at the Dawn of the Atomic Age*, to be published by Pantheon in November.

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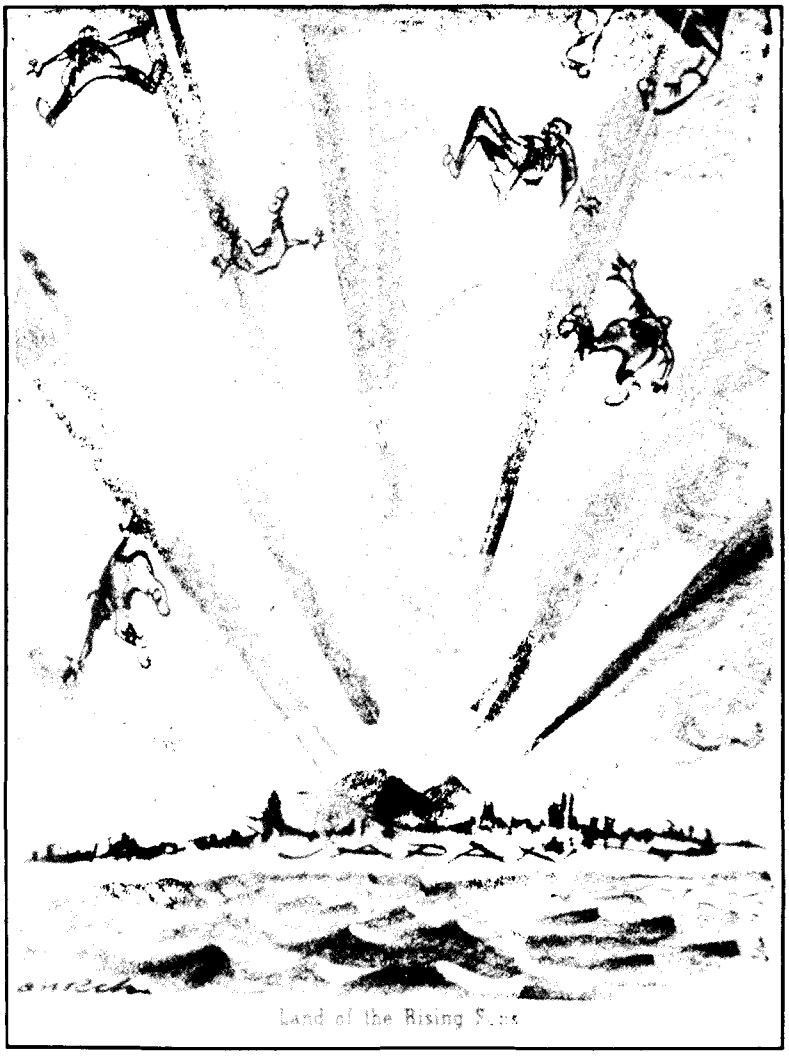
White, and others raised charges of racism in the decision to use the atomic bomb against a darker-skinned people.

Generally speaking, however, the news of August 6 elicited an overwhelmingly favorable response. This was, after all, wartime. For nearly four years Americans had been subjected to anti-Japanese propaganda, some of an incredibly crude racist character. Indeed, this racism spilled over into initial reactions to the bomb. *The Philadelphia Inquirer*'s political cartoonist pictured an apelike creature staring up in gaping incomprehension as the bomb bursts overhead. A *Chicago Tribune* cartoon pictured a severed head murmuring "So Sorry."

President Truman's initial announcement linked Japan's surprise attack at Pearl Harbor to the retribution meted out at Hiroshima, and this moral symmetry appealed to many early postwar commentators on the bomb. In his influential 1946 book *Dawn Over Zero*, William L. Laurence of *The New York Times*, the Manhattan Project's official chronicler, described his feelings aboard the plane headed for Nagasaki: "Does one feel any pity or compassion for the poor devils about to die? Not when one thinks of Pearl Harbor and of the Death March on Bataan." Given the intensity of this war spirit, it is hardly surprising that with rare exceptions Hiroshima and Nagasaki figure hardly at all in early postwar American fiction or poetry.

Awareness of the magnitude of the civilian toll at Hiroshima was initially blunted by President Truman's announcement, which declared: "The world will note that the first atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, a military base. That was because we wished in this first attack to avoid, insofar as possible, the killing of civilians." Of course, Americans quickly realized that Hiroshima was not a Japanese Fort Benning, but a major city. Even then, however, they did not respond with the shock that a totally unprecedented innovation in strategic bombing policy might have elicited. By August 1945 Americans were conditioned to accept the slaughter of civilian populations as a legitimate military practice. At Dresden, Hamburg, and other German cities, and then in the Japanese war, the obliteration of cities had become the de facto Allied bombing strategy by 1945. More civilians died in the Tokyo firebombing raid of March 10, 1945, than perished at Hiroshima.

The most compelling factor of all in shaping the initial American response to Hiroshima was surely the universal insistence of policymakers and opinion leaders that the only alternative to the atomic bomb would have been a land invasion of Japan costing hundreds of thousands of American lives. A few challenged this assertion. The Manhattan Project scientists who had urgently advocated a demonstration shot prior to all-out military use continued to raise questions after the war's end. Reports of Japanese peace feelers in early August quickly surfaced after V-J Day. The United States Strategic Bombing Survey concluded in 1946, after many interviews with Japanese officials, that Japan almost certainly would have surrendered by December 1, and probably by November 1, even without the atomic bomb, Russia's declaration of war, or an American invasion. In *Fear, War, and the Bomb* (1948), the Nobel Prize-winning British physicist (and political leftist) P. M. S. Blackett suggested that power calculations involving the Soviet Union had figured importantly in Washington's decision.



FROM THE ATLANTA CONSTITUTION, AUGUST 8, 1945

For the vast majority of Americans, however, the theme that the atomic bomb "saved American lives" took deep root, obviating the need for any further discussion. Blackett's realpolitik argument was angrily denounced by most American reviewers. (Not until the 1960s, in a very different political climate, would this "revisionist" interpretation gain a serious hearing.) Dwight Macdonald was one of the very few to challenge the moral legitimacy of this argument; it could, he said, be used to rationalize "*any* atrocious action, absolutely *any* one." But his was a lonely voice in 1945. In fact, some elaborated the argument still further: they claimed that the bomb had saved *Japanese* lives as well, in bringing a hopeless struggle to a decisive conclusion. As the *Chicago Tribune* put it in commenting on the American leaders' atomic bomb decision: "Being merciless, they were merciful." (A *Tribune* editorial made the point visually, picturing a dove of peace flying over Japan with an atomic bomb in its beak.)

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Any consideration of the early cultural response to Hiroshima must take into account John Hersey's remarkable work of 1946. Published first in a single issue of *The New Yorker* and then as a book, and now reissued with a new chapter for the 40th anniversary, Hersey's *Hiroshima*, with its straightforward factual account of the experiences of six ordinary men and women during and after the atomic bombing, helped transform the caricatured "Japs" of wartime propaganda back into Japanese—into fellow human beings. This was unquestionably a significant achievement, and one for which Hersey has been deservedly praised. But it has proven extraordinarily difficult for critics and cultural historians to assess his work's broader impact. For many readers the effect seems to have been at once intensely moving and curiously passive. Hersey's restrained, uninflected *New Yorker* prose offered a kind of expiation and catharsis, a closing of accounts on a troubling episode, rather than a challenge to push on to a deeper, more threatening engagement with it.

THAT the response of most Americans to Hiroshima and Nagasaki froze immediately at the surface level, never moving to a deeper plane of moral complexity, is surely attributable in large part to the fact that the nation's media and opinion molders quickly turned to other aspects of the atomic energy story. Within hours of the White House announcement, newspapers and magazines were offering detailed explanations of nuclear physics, long self-congratulatory histories of the Manhattan Project, and euphoric discussions of an atomic energy utopia of limitless power, atomic cars and planes, medical wonders, boundless leisure, and revolutions in agriculture. That this latest scientific wonder had burst upon the world's consciousness through the obliteration of a city seemed merely a regrettable piece of bad luck—rather as though electricity had first become known through the mass electrocution of several hundred thousand people.

Some went further, suggesting that the destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki had been an essential step in making atomic energy available for peaceful purposes. As *Collier's* magazine put it in a 1947 feature on "the positive side of the atom," the Hiroshima blast had "illuminated hitherto impenetrable continents of human knowledge." Similarly, those who believed the atomic bomb would assure world peace by making war too horrible to contemplate stressed the symbolic importance of the event. "Never in all the long history of human slaughter have lives been lost to greater purpose," *Reader's Digest* declared in November 1945; all mankind was now united by bonds "fused unbreakably in the diabolical heat of those explosions."

Hiroshima and Nagasaki penetrated the postwar American consciousness in another important symbolic respect as well: as examples of what might lie ahead for American cities. CBS radio newsman Don Goddard made the point graphically:

> There is reason to believe tonight that our new atomic bomb destroyed the entire Japanese city of Hiroshima in a single blast. . . . Hiroshima has a population of 343,000. It would be the same, then, as the destruction of our own metropolitan district of New Haven, Connecticut, in a blinding instant. It would be the same as Denver, Colorado, with a population of 350,000 persons, being there one moment, and wiped out the next.

At the moment of victory, the nation suddenly felt itself naked and vulnerable, and Hiroshima became the emblem of that vulnerability. "In that terrible flash 10,000 miles away," wrote Washington correspondent James Reston in *The New York Times*, men and women in the capital had "glimpsed the future of America."

The immense symbolic and polemical value of Hiroshima and Nagasaki was heavily exploited by activist scientists and others who in 1946 sought to arouse public support for the Acheson-Lilienthal international control plan. "Only one tactic is dependable—the preaching of doom," one scientist told *The New Yorker*; anything else was "met with yawns." Without international control of the atom, Americans were endlessly warned, the fate of these two cities would be their fate as well.

Highly effective as propaganda, this shorthand use of "Hiroshima" and "Nagasaki" as abstract cautionary devices further diminished the capacity of Americans to respond directly to the actual fate of two real cities. The emotional thrust of the 1946 fear campaign was directed forward to possible future atomic holocausts, not backward to what had already occurred. Indeed, one international control activist urged the pacifist A. J. Muste to mute his criticism of the atomic bombing of Japan, since it was diverting attention from the important political task at hand. Muste, however, like the Catholic bishops, was convinced that the nuclear future and the nuclear past were inextricably linked. Without confronting Hiroshima and Nagasaki, he later wrote, "no political or moral appraisal of our age is adequate, no attempt to find an answer to its dilemmas and destiny offers hope."

This brings us to the final, perhaps the underlying, reason why the American people proved so reluctant to grapple with the full implications of Hiroshima and Nagasaki after the war, why after 40 years we still approach with such uncertainty the events of that distant August. The nuclear obliteration of two cities on orders from Washington forced Americans of 1945, and forces us today, to face up to the extent to which the fighting of World War II had descended into wholesale and indiscriminate slaughter. And this recognition, in turn, seems seriously to compromise the moral clarity of what has come to be called "The Good War." In contrast to the ambiguities of some of America's military involvements since 1945, World War II united the American people in a wholly justifiable struggle against forces that represented the very embodiment of evil. But the nuclear devastation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, coupled with the destruction of other cities by "conventional" means, adds an unsettlingly discordant note to the picture. To contemplate Hiroshima and Nagasaki unblinkingly is to confront our recent moral history in the most radical way imaginable. Few were ready to do that in 1945. Few have been prepared to do it since.

TWO cultural products perfectly symbolize the complexity of the early American response to Hiroshima. The first was a dramatic affirmation of the "official" view, a manifestation of the effort to assimilate the atomic bombing of Japan quickly and easily into our collective memory and our moral tradition.

It is Navy Day, October 27, 1945, ten weeks after the end of World War II. In Japan thousands are still dying of atomic bomb injuries and radiation disease. But at the Los Angeles Coliseum that evening, 100,000 people gather for one of those lurid extravaganzas at which Southern California used to excel: a "Tribute to Victory" pageant reenacting

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the war in the Pacific. Searchlights stab the sky; the resonant voice of narrator Edward G. Robinson fills the vast open-air coliseum. Toward the end comes the pièce de résistance: the atomic bombing of Hiroshima. *The Los Angeles Times* described the scene:

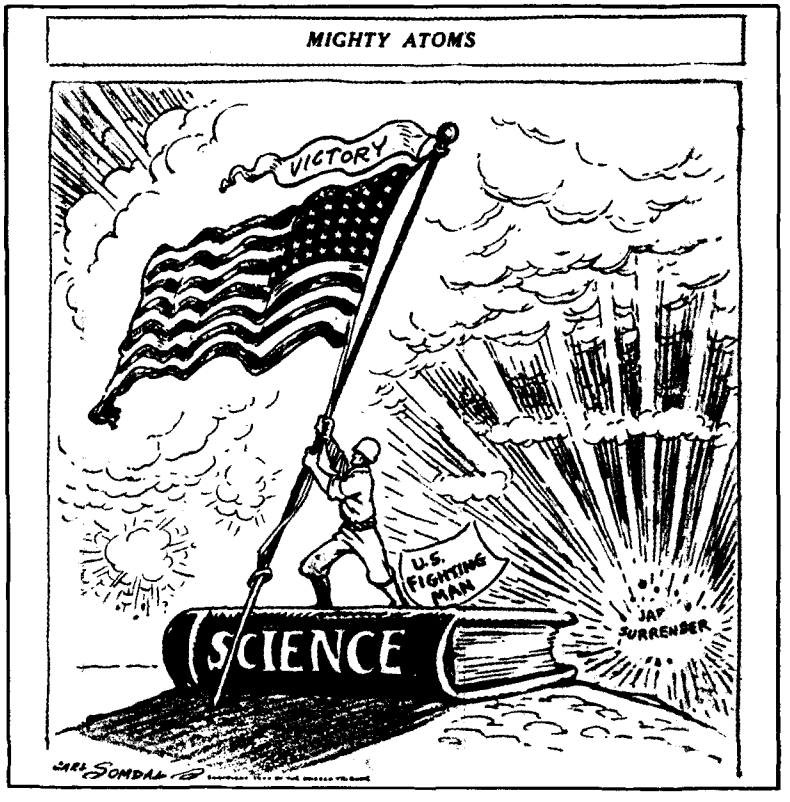
> At a signal, a low-flying B-29 skimmed over the bowl, the multi-colored search light beams tinting its gleaming silver with pastels. As the big bomber roared over the peristyle, a terrific detonation shook the ground, a burst of flame flashed on the field and great billows of smoke mushroomed upward in an almost too-real depiction of devastation.
>
> As the smoke snaked skyward, red and blue lights played over the white column with magic effectiveness.

The searchlights then shift to the American flag and a reenactment of the Japanese surrender aboard the USS *Missouri*. (Walter Pidgeon is Douglas MacArthur.) One hundred thousand people (a number of some resonance, when one thinks of the atomic bomb) go wild: "It was a thrilling sight, and one that set the crowd cheering long and loudly."

Meanwhile, across the continent in New York City, far from the public eye, the critic and aspiring novelist James Agee was in quite a different mood. Profoundly shaken by the news, Agee at once started a novel about the atomic bomb. "In some respects," he wrote his friend the Episcopal priest James Flye, "this seems the only thing much worth writing or thinking about." But he soon bogged down, and in November wrote Father Flye that he had not returned to the project for nearly a month. Except for an incomplete fragment, Agee's atomic bomb novel remained unwritten.

Still, that 5,000-word fragment, which Agee eventually described as a "rough sketch for a moving picture," is a highly revealing document. Titled "Dedication Day," it is a disturbing work, in some ways a brilliant work, of surreal satire. It describes the dedication in Washington, D.C., of a soaring "fused uranium" arch designed by Frank Lloyd Wright in commemoration of the atomic bomb. Beneath the arch burns the Eternal Fuse, a strand of chemically treated cotton that unrolls from an elaborate underground mechanism through a platinum orifice designed as a replica of Martha Washington's wedding ring.

It is a glorious occasion. Flags wave in the breeze under a brilliant sun. Top government officials and foreign dignitaries are on hand. Arturo Toscanini leads an orchestra in the choral movement of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony.



FROM THE CHICAGO DAILY TRIBUNE, AUGUST 11, 1945

Representatives of the major religious faiths offer appropriate prayers. By a special hookup, the new electronic marvel television carries the ceremony to New York City, where more notables are assembled. A beautiful little girl named "Lidice," "her bladder a trifle unstabilized" by all the attention, unveils the arch's commemorative plaque. It bears only the cryptic inscription: "THIS IS IT."

Darkening the festivities, however, is an undercurrent of menace. The Eternal Fuse burns with a faint crackling sound "not unlike that which a snake elicits as he retires among dead leaves." A bugler struggles against the impulse to play taps rather than the reveille he has been assigned. At the moment of dedication, a pregnant woman faints and miscarries.

The menace deepens as the story shifts to the workroom beneath the arch where the Keepers of the Flame—crippled war veterans and maimed victims of Hiroshima and Nagasaki—work around the clock manufacturing the Eternal Fuse, which burns at a constant rate of one inch per second. Among the Keepers of the Flame is an elderly atomic scientist whose mind has become unhinged. He constantly weeps, pulls at his hair, claws at his face until the blood drips over his white laboratory jacket, and babbles of a religious pilgrimage to Tibet.

On Dedication Day this deranged scientist asks permission to switch on the machine that will operate the Eternal Fuse, and out of deference to his past achievements his wish is granted. Just as he activates the switch, however, he swallows prussic acid and falls dead. In a suicide note he says that by his death he hoped to atone for his wartime role and to "endow the triumphal moment with a new and special significance." Despite public anger at his bizarre and unseemly act, he is buried with full honors at ground zero of the Alamogordo test site in New Mexico.

A tantalizingly incomplete work, "Dedication Day" makes plain the intensity and bitterness of Agee's feeling about the atomic bomb. The story's topographical structure—official celebrations above ground contrasting with strange and disturbed goings-on below—metaphorically suggests his sense of the complex and partly hidden nature of the American response to the bomb.

In the decades since, our cultural engagement with Hiroshima and Nagasaki has been played out between these extremes of official justification and private unease. To his death President Truman vigorously defended his decision. The history textbooks, bastions of the official culture, treat the atomic bombing in a sketchy, bland, and mor-

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ally neutral fashion. But always the subterranean uneasiness has remained, intensifying when the general level of awareness of the nuclear threat is at a high pitch. During the late 1950s and early 1960s, when fear of radioactive fallout from thermonuclear tests was widespread, Hiroshima and Nagasaki received correspondingly more attention. This attention took many forms: the publication of Michihiko Hachiya's *Hiroshima Diary* in 1955, the media coverage lavished upon the disfigured "Hiroshima Maidens" whom Norman Cousins brought to America for plastic surgery that same year, the appearance of the autobiography of alleged "Hiroshima pilot" Claude Eatherly in 1962, the 1963 "Twilight Zone" episode in which an American, transported back to Hiroshima moments before the bomb will fall, frantically but unsuccessfully tries to convince the people to flee, the 1963 *Daedalus* article in which Robert Jay Lifton first explored the emotional world of the Hiroshima survivors and the "psychic numbing" by which they had managed to carry on.

FROM THE LOUISVILLE COURIER JOURNAL, AUGUST 10, 1945

Nuclear awareness faded after the signing of the 1963 test ban treaty and the shift of activist attention to the Vietnam War. But in the late 1970s the pendulum swung once more, and again Hiroshima and Nagasaki—the Banquo's ghost of our postwar American consciousness—became the subject of public discourse and cultural expression.

Thus the American cultural and intellectual engagement with Hiroshima has remained episodic and inconclusive. The reasons are clear enough. Hiroshima challenges not only our view of World War II, but also some of our most deep-seated beliefs about the meaning of our national experience. For years, cultural historians have noted the power and the tenacity of the myth of American innocence: the belief that we are somehow set apart from the other nations of the world, our motives higher, our methods purer. This myth has never lacked for critics, of course, and as early as the 1920s it came under massive challenge. But it remained potent well after World War II, and is far from dead today. It is very difficult, to say the least, to fit Hiroshima into a moral schema rooted in a national mythology of innocence and exceptionalism.

For Hiroshima raises in the starkest imaginable fashion that most troublesome of ethical dilemmas: At what point are good motives corrupted and perverted by the means employed to achieve them? If that point was not reached at Hiroshima—and certainly at Nagasaki—at what conceivable point in the actions of a nation state would it be reached? These are not questions for which our image of America has prepared us. Consider, for example, Freeman Dyson's reflections, in *Disturbing the Universe*, on the anger of many American atomic scientists when J. Robert Oppenheimer, in a famous comment of 1948, described them having "known sin": They lacked the tragic sense of life which was deeply ingrained in every European of my generation [the generation of the First World War]. They had never lived with tragedy and had no feeling for it. Having no sense of tragedy, they also had no sense of guilt. They seemed very young and innocent although most of them were older than I was. They had come through the war without scars. Los Alamos had been for them a great lark. It left their innocence untouched. That was why they were unable to accept Oppy's statement as expressing a truth about themselves.

Hiroshima challenges another foundation stone of American culture as well: our proud pragmatism, the tradition of William James and John Dewey. Absolutist thinking must be abandoned, James insisted; the best test of truth is its practical usefulness in helping us achieve our purposes. Give up abstract moralizing, Dewey agreed; accept reality as it actually presents itself and concentrate on shaping it toward intelligently formulated social ends. The same experimental method that gave rise to modern science, he said, must now be applied in the social realm. In practice, this philosophy led Dewey to support enthusiastically American intervention in the First World War. That conflict, he believed, could be utilized by engaged intellectuals for progressive purposes at home and abroad.

The pragmatic tradition is not conducive to the taking of principled moral stands. (Those like Jane Addams and Randolph Bourne who did take such a stand in 1917-18 found themselves on the margin, if not ostracized.) But if Hiroshima does not demand that one at least most seriously consider such a stand, what situation possibly could? The experimental ethic is serviceable when the results of a failed "experiment" can be corrected with relative ease. It is less satisfactory in helping us formulate a position toward decisions like the one President Truman faced in

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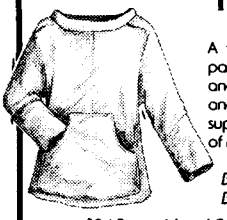
August 1945—and others may face in the future.

Finally, our national discourse over Hiroshima remains so deeply troubling because it is not merely about a past event, however divisive or traumatic, but also about contemporary public policy issues of the gravest import. Culture and politics are never wholly separable, of course, but in this instance they are interwoven in a particularly complex and volatile way. Our sporadic but continuing effort to come to terms with Hiroshima is part of our larger struggle to clarify, collectively and individually, our view of World War II, our vision of America, our characteristic approach to issues of ethics and value, and finally a way of comprehending the nuclear reality itself.



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GRASS GROWS GREENER

On Writing and Politics: 1967-1983
by Günter Grass
translated by Ralph Manheim

(Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 176 pp., $13.95)

Günter Grass, the publisher's blurb informs us, "is a foremost voice of commitment in a Germany whose writers, in the past, notoriously avoided political engagement. . . ." "A Germany"? Which Germany? The one in which Grass lives and works? But writers in the Federal Republic—and not just the world-famous company of Grass & Böll—have long played a larger part in national politics, have been more actively engaged and more widely heard, than their counterparts in any other Western country. Yes, this is a conscious reaction, by both the writers and their audience, against what they see as the political failure of writers in Germany before 1945; and that is no doubt what our blurb writer had in mind. But this political failure is not adequately described as the avoidance of commitment.

To be sure, a profound truth was expressed in Thomas Mann's famous observations on the propensity of German intellectuals (and not just writers) to withdraw into an inner world of private culture and *Innerlichkeit*, to separate the "spiritual-artistic" (*Geistig-Künstlerische*) from the "social-political" worlds—a propensity that he identified as one main cause of their failure to resist the challenge of Nazism in the early 1930s (and which he had earlier shared). To be sure, Grass himself says in a speech reprinted here, "It may be that as a writer I derived my ideas from the downfall of the Weimar Republic . . . [when] the majority of German writers made no attempt to defend the Republic . . ."—but he immediately adds: "while not a few of them deliberately held it up to ridicule." For every two German writers who passed through the era of tyranny and genocide in a cocoon on *Innerlichkeit*, there is at least one who was passionately committed—on the wrong side. Or rather, on one wrong side or another. It is Grass again who points up the awful symmetries of committed literature in German: "Brecht's hymns to Stalin are in no way superior to Heidegger's kowtowings to National Socialism," he writes. "If someone were to set up a waxworks museum with prominent literary figures personifying the relationship between literature and revolution, Anna Seghers and Ilya Ehrenburg would have to be grouped with Gottfried Benn and Ezra Pound."

So what this volume invites us to admire, more precisely, is a German writer committed *in the right way*. In politics, the Federal Republic has its model *Bundestag*; in industry, its exemplary *Mitbestimmung*; in literature, its Grass. The earlier speeches and occasional pieces collected here do indeed give cause to admire. Here he is, in a speech to the Belgrade Writers Conference in 1969, declaring:

> Ladies and Gentlemen, I'll come right out with it: I'm against revolution. [As *The Tin Drum* shows, Grass has a genius for opening lines.] I detest the sacrifices that al-

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> ways have to be made in its name. I detest its superhuman goals, its absolute demands, its inhuman intolerance; I fear the mechanism of revolution.

At a time when many of his intellectual contemporaries were, so to speak, gunning for revolution (and a few were later to do so literally, as terrorists), and in a place where some praise of revolution might be thought de rigueur (and Yugoslavia, unlike most of Eastern Europe, did have a real revolution), Grass raises the voice of reasoned commitment to social democratic gradualism. He is for change, but never for sudden, violent change. His chosen emblem is the snail. He is always, full-bloodedly, on the side of the oppressed, the individual, the little man, whether in Czechoslovakia under Husak or in Greece under the colonels. He speaks up for freedom and human rights as loudly in Athens as in Belgrade. "A writer must face up to the test of reality," he declares, "including political reality. . . ."

Yet just a decade later, this voice is thundering from the choir of St. Paul's Church in Frankfurt:

> Of course, the crime for which we Germans bear responsibility cannot be compared to the nuclear genocide with which we are demonstrably threatened. But there is no great difference between the cynical disregard of the basic ethical values by the ill-famed Wannsee Conference, which decreed the "final solution," and the cynicism that in our own day produces war games simulating nuclear combat with projections of here 50, there 80 million dead. Every German should know that we would be first to feed our numbers into the figuring machine.

Therefore, remembering the consequences of not resisting Nazism, the Germans must now reach for forms of extraparliamentary action to resist deployment of cruise and Pershing missiles, for it is likely that "the present parliamentary majority" will consent to deployment, and thus "commit the Federal Republic to the madness of the two superpowers—which amounts to nothing less than calculated genocide."

And if you are not impressed by this sober, realistic analysis, this responsible language and scrupulously fair historical comparison—so different from earlier German writers—then pray consider his sober, scrupulous, and responsible comparison of Poland and Nicaragua, written after a protracted eight-day visit to the latter country in 1982, as a guest of Sergio Ramirez and Ernesto Cardenal. Solidarity and the Sandinistas, he finds, "have much in common." "The revolution that was suppressed in Poland won in Nicaragua three years ago. . . ." True, Solidarity activists are political prisoners, whereas Sandinistas are political jailers—but what humane jailers! "No other Third World country employs such methods, which are modeled after those used in Scandinavia." True, the Church is on the other side—but this is because the Polish pope hasn't yet understood "that Sandinism and Solidarity have common roots." Seeing all this, Grass "began to feel ashamed that the United States is an ally of my country. I wish West Germany would renounce that alliance. . . ." And later: "The American representative at the United Nations called the resettlement of the Miskitos 'genocide.' That is a lie, and it comes from a country that was founded on the stolen land and genocide of Indians."

So the enemy of revolution has become its advocate. The sober realist emerges as a caricature of the literary fellow traveler. (Scandinavian prison methods!) The writer who had apparently best understood the moral responsibility of using the German language now sinks to the absurdity about "a country founded on the stolen land and genocide of Indians." And this, we might retort, from a country responsible for the most infamous genocide of our time! Is it more ridiculous to consider Grass morally disqualified from criticizing America because of Auschwitz than it is to consider Mrs. Jeane Kirkpatrick morally disqualified from criticizing Nicaragua because of Colonel Custer? What sort of argument is this? (To be fair, the thought is expressed slightly less starkly in the original, which says literally that "this lie rebounds on a country whose relatively short history is founded among other things on land theft and genocide." Here, as elsewhere, Manheim's translation is as free as it is vigorous.)

What has happened to Grass?

PERHAPS the beginning of an explanation is suggested by Salman Rushdie's comment, in his adulatory introduction, that Grass "is a metaphorical being" who "lives more comfortably in images." And in one of Grass's essays on his "teacher," Alfred Döblin, we find what is surely his *metaphore maîtresse*. In Döblin's novel *Mountains, Oceans, and Giants*, we read,

> In the course of a purge, Marduk [one of the absolute rulers of the future megalopolis Berlin] had twenty-one scientists . . . arrested and shut up in an experimental forest, the trees and bushes of which proceeded to swell and proliferate and exude juices until the forest absorbed the bodies of the scientists. . . .

The inventors of the growth miracle dissolved in their invention:

> The mammothlike, oozing, crashing growth squeezed, pressed, mangled the scientists, crushed their rib cages, broke their backbones, compressed their skulls, poured their white brains over the roots . . .

For Grass, that forest is the modern world. Our states are like those scientists. Döblin's nightmare megalopolis anticipates Orwell's *1984*.

> In Indonesia or Thailand the ruling classes happen to be anticommunist and therefore totalitarian, whereas the rulers of Burma and Cambodia define themselves as socialist and justify their totalitarian rule on grounds of anticapitalism and anti-imperialism. But regardless of interchangeable ideological costumes and the permutations of their ruling classes, all these states have one thing in common: they are all being absorbed by a worldwide collectivism, whose technological superstructure, from data banks to nuclear reactors, is being supplied, in free imitation of Döblin and Orwell, by the industrial countries of both blocks.

Writers have no place in this world. Their task is to resist it:

> Like troublesome ghosts they haunt the megalopolises. . . . They radiate playful tenderness, overflowing sympathy, nostalgia for a past that would like to dream up a future, old-fashioned brotherly love. In the midst of unfeeling power struggles, they preserve their sensibility.

And Grass goes on to praise two individuals who resist: a young doctor who has chosen to stay with the starving poor of northwestern Thailand, rather than making for the fleshpots of Bangkok like most of his colleagues, and a young teacher who has stayed with the slum children of Khlong Toei. This passage is profoundly moving. It is a greathearted piece of writing. It reflects a noble vision of the writer's role. As Orwell said of Dickens: behind the page we see the face of a man who is generously angry.

But it also helps us to understand why Grass ultimately fails the test he sets himself: the test of political reality. For if the dilemma of modern man is everywhere essentially the same—if we are all being crushed by Marduk's for-

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est—then such small differences as those between East and West, communist and anticommunist, nuclear weapons and nuclear reactors, deterrence and genocide, USA and USSR, are profoundly unimportant. Grass has always been something of a symmetrist. In a speech from 1973 reprinted here he declares: "In Greece and Czechoslovakia the most repugnant aspects of the two bloc systems are revealed for all to see." In 1985, with Mr. Papandreou in power rather than the colonels, this reads quite strangely.

But Grass's symmetrism, like that of most of his West German intellectual contemporaries, has grown more strident of late. Like Petra Kelly, he now increasingly lumps all the evils of the modern world into one bag—"the System" for Kelly, Marduk's forest for Grass. Like Kelly, the emotional cutting edge of his indignation is directed against the United States. His condemnation of martial law in Poland comes out like this: "I believe . . . that Poland is entirely comparable with Nicaragua and other states in Central America, with what the United States is trying to do there and has often enough done." (I quote from an interview with a West Berlin magazine, not included in this book.) American policy is the measure of Soviet evil.

Now Grass confronts the imagined superpower dragon of modernity with an imagined world of "old-fashioned brotherly love" and authenticity. With his ever more emotional, extreme, and irrational language—arguing with the heart—he both reflects and creates a climate of opinion in Germany. His words have consequences. The man who seemed to have learned most from the past behavior of German writers now begins to reproduce it. In Nicaragua, of all places, he, of all people, transports himself into that terrible waxworks museum of German Writers for Revolution, Anna Seghers to his left, Gottfried Benn to his right. It is a sad sight—Grass gone to seed.

TIMOTHY GARTON ASH

Timothy Garton Ash is foreign editor of *The Spectator*. His *The Polish Revolution: Solidarity* was recently reissued in Vintage paperback.

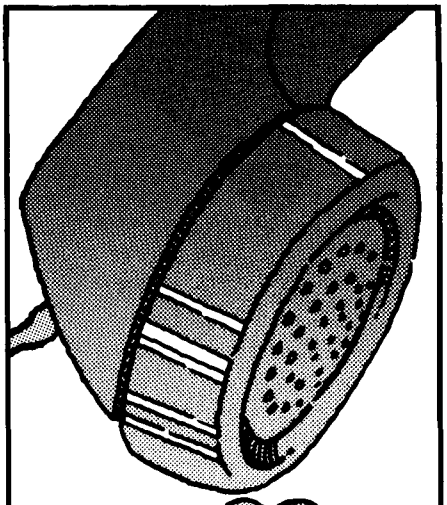
HOW MUCH IS ENOUGH?

Brotherhood of Arms: General Dynamics and the Business of Defending America by Jacob Goodwin

(Times Books, 420 pp., $18.95)

Since 1981 the Pentagon has spent $1.1 trillion to defend America. This is a third more money than it spent during the previous four years. Almost 30 percent of this total has gone for weapons—designed and produced by large corporations like G.E., Pratt and Whitney, McDonnell Douglas, Hughes Aircraft, and General Dynamics. Not surprisingly, during the past four years the average stock price of America's 15 major defense contractors has risen 25 percent, considerably higher than the Dow-Jones industrial average.

Even though Congress appears bent on curtailing the growth of further military spending, the immediate outlook for defense contractors seems bright. About $198 billion of orders are in the pipeline—enough to keep prime contractors busy for years. The prospects for a major arms limitation agreement with the Soviets appear dim. Reagan's Star Wars proposal will channel billions more toward the major aerospace concerns. Defense contractors continue to enjoy extraordinary tax advantages (they pay no taxes until a project is finished, but can deduct expenses year by year). And defense is one of the few markets in which the Japanese can't make major inroads. No wonder other large American corporations, like General Motors, are so intent



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on buying into this lucrative field.

Yet America's defense contractors seem perversely ungrateful for this bonanza. Not a week goes by without another story about their apparent deceit, venality, greed, or unusual negligence. G.E. recently admitted to defrauding the Air Force of $800,000 by forging workers' time cards on a contract for upgrading the warheads on Minuteman missiles. McDonnell Douglas has produced fighter jets whose tail fins develop unusual cracks. Hughes Aircraft's missiles are faulty. Texas Instruments's semiconductors don't work as they should. And then there are the $500 hammers and $7,000 coffee makers. Last year more than 500 contractors were suspended or permanently barred from doing business with the Pentagon, because of poor workmanship or questionable billings. Forty-five of the nation's 100 largest military contractors are now under criminal investigation for kickbacks, illegal overcharges, and other nefarious activities.

IT IS tempting to regard this dismal record as yet another indictment of American capitalism. American managers can't manage. American workers don't give a damn. Fraud is endemic. Even when relieved of competition from the Japanese, we still can't seem to deliver the goods. But the facts don't support this morose conclusion, at least with regard to the recent problems experienced by our major defense contractors. Surely their managers and workers are not above reproach. Yet the system by which the Pentagon selects and procures new weapons must bear the largest share of responsibility, as is vividly illustrated in Jacob Goodwin's *Brotherhood of Arms*.

Goodwin, a former consultant to the secretary of defense and a reporter for *Defense Week*, gives us a carefully detailed account of the rise and fall of General Dynamics—America's third-largest defense contractor in 1984, with 92,600 employees and prime contracts nearing six billion dollars. General Dynamics deals with all three branches of the Pentagon. It sells the Army its principal weapon, the M-1 Abrams battle tank; the Navy, its Trident missile-firing submarine as well as attack submarines and sea-launched cruise missiles. But the firm has been plagued by charges of mismanagement, illegal kickbacks, and overcharges. The Defense Department's inspector general recently recommended that the company's top officers be barred from bidding on any further government contracts. Last May, Navy Secretary John Lehman Jr. suspended the signing of all new contracts with two major divisions of General Dynamics because of "pervasive" business misconduct, and urged that the company establish a code of ethics for its employees. Soon thereafter David Lewis, the firm's chief executive officer, resigned.

WHAT happened? Goodwin reveals in fascinating detail how the Pentagon and General Dynamics created through the years a symbiotic relationship that rested on stability and trust. But the destabilizing effects of a rapid defense buildup undermined that trust, and the mounting distrust generated further instabilities. Over time, the delicate relationship began to unravel.

Goodwin weaves several related stories through his narrative, but the central epic is that of General Dynamics's Electric Boat Division, which has had the awesome responsibility of producing the Navy's high-speed nuclear-powered attack submarines. The tale began in 1968 when, fearful of Soviet submarine advances, Secretary of Defense Clark Clifford approved the development of a new fleet. The Pentagon commissioned the Electric Boat Division quickly to build 18 of these advanced nuclear subs. But at the urging of Admiral Hyman Rickover, ever suspicious of defense contractors' propensity to featherbed, the Navy had insisted that Electric Boat do the job at a fixed price, rather than under a more typical "cost-plus" contract—through which the firm simply would have billed the Navy whatever "reasonable" costs it incurred to produce the fleet, plus an allocation for overhead and profit. General Dynamics bid a fixed price of $1.2 billion.

Years later, when the project's actual costs ballooned far beyond $1.2 billion, the question would arise: Had General Dynamics made an unreasonably low bid for the job—aware that the Navy eventually would be forced to make up the difference? The truth is far more complicated than the question would suggest. At the time the firm bid on the job, no one knew how much it would cost to build high-speed nuclear-powered attack submarines, because they had never been built before. It was a risky proposition. Although there was pressure on the firm to get the job, the pressure was diffused. The specific bids and resulting contracts were thousands of pages long—negotiated by dozens of people in the company, many of whom would rotate to new positions before the submarine job would be completed. Responsibilities for estimating costs, establishing the production schedule, and assuring quality were intentionally dispersed among several senior executives so as to better guard against fraud.

There was also pressure on the Navy to find a contractor who could handle the job. The Electric Boat Division was one of only two contractors capable of making nuclear submarines. (Only six percent of Pentagon contracts are let competitively to a wide range of potential contractors, largely because so few companies are able to take on these herculean tasks; the vast majority of contracts are negotiated with just one or two large corporations.)

THE NAVY pushed the entire design and construction process faster than it normally moved. Typically two years pass between the design of a prototype for a new vehicle or weapon and its actual production. During that time "bugs" can be worked out. In this instance, however, production was scheduled soon after design. To make matters worse, Newport News Shipyard—which had received the contract to design the subs—had never before drawn up plans for a nuclear-powered submarine, and was late getting the blueprints to Electric Boat. The Navy itself was late delivering construction specifications. And even after construction began, there were numerous design changes—to eliminate newly discovered safety hazards, introduce technological improvements, and strengthen parts that had failed during tests. With steady improvements under way in the Soviet navy, the Pentagon's planners wanted to be sure that this new generation of submarines was as advanced as possible.

Meanwhile, in order to do the mammoth job as quickly as the Navy required, General Dynamics's Electric Boat Division had to grow like Topsy. Its shipyard labor force mushroomed from 12,000 workers in 1971 to 18,800 in 1975 to almost 30,000 by the middle of 1977. The firm had entered the 1970s with an experienced crew of pipe fitters, electricians, carpenters, ship fitters, welders, painters, and scrapers—hardworking, skilled, middle-aged Ital-

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ian and Puerto Rican men who took pride in their tasks. But the new recruits had far less experience. By the middle of the decade, as many as 12 green workers were being trained by one skilled craftsman. The proportion of skilled workers plummeted from 80 percent of the work force in 1972 to 35 percent four years later. And the new workers were far less dedicated to the job. Marijuana, pills, and alcohol became common menaces at the shipyards. Some of the new recruits were blacks and women, and the shipyard became the scene of an increasing number of racial and sexual incidents.

ON December 1, 1976—one month after Jimmy Carter defeated Gerald Ford for the presidency—the Electric Boat Division submitted to the Pentagon a claim for almost half a billion dollars in additional charges to complete the job. The controversy boiled on for the next eight years. On one side was General Dynamics (and several other companies whose shipyards had also fallen behind on other jobs, for similar reasons) and its government contract lawyers in Washington. General Dynamics shareholders were restive; the firm had not paid a cash dividend since 1970, and a huge loss on this job would make the balance sheet all the worse. On another side was the Navy, beset with internal disagreements. Officers in the Naval Sea Systems Command were unwilling to reimburse the shipyards for claims they felt were totally unjustified; but civilian leaders in the Pentagon were concerned lest the new ships and submarines be jeopardized. And on a third side were congressional opponents of any settlement package that looked like a corporate bailout. They were rivaled in turn by senators and representatives in whose states and districts these shipyards existed, who worried about the economic health of the contractors and subcontractors.

At one point in this drama General Dynamics threatened to stop all work on the attack subs until the Navy agreed to pay the claimed amount. The threat was part of a carefully conceived legal strategy: the firm knew that the Navy would turn to the courts to get an injunction compelling the company to continue working. The federal courts would likely order the firm to continue in the interest of national defense, but would order the Navy to pay construction costs incurred during the interim while the larger claim was being resolved. Thus, by this legal route, General Dynamics could at least assure itself that all continuing work would be performed on a "cost-plus" basis. The strategy was also calculated to mobilize the political support of Connecticut's and Rhode Island's congressional delegations, which were panicked at the thought of partial closure of the shipyards.

In the end, the Navy compromised—offering to pay half of the claimed overcharges. But the accusations did not end there. Admiral Rickover suspected fraud, and badgered the Navy into investigating the Electric Boat Division's claims. At this point the story grows even more bizarre. In 1982 the Justice Department charged P. Takis Veliotis—who headed Electric Boat during the latter part of the 1970s, and is credited with instituting several managerial reforms—with taking $2.7 million in kickbacks from subcontractors. Veliotis quickly departed for his native Greece. Subsequently, as part of a plea bargain, Veliotis provided the Justice Department with documents and surreptitiously made tapes of business calls, showing that the cost overruns were General Dynamics's fault all along.

Who is really to blame for this mess? Where does this sad history leave us? Goodwin doesn't draw explicit lessons

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from the episodes he relates, but his narrative suggests a clear line of argument.

Every major cost-overrun, scandal, or mistake in military contracting predictably elicits two powerful political reactions. On the one hand, Congress and the public are anxious to identify wrongdoers. There are elaborate criminal investigations, grand jury indictments, and stories in the press suggesting egregious instances of venality and cupidity. Most of these end in charges being dropped for want of adequate evidence of criminal intent, or in watered-down plea bargains that at least temporarily satisfy the public's desire to place blame.

On the other hand, the Pentagon is pressured to add layers of checks, monitors, and inspectors—to clog the procurement process with more paperwork, red tape, bureaucracy. In the wake of last year's disclosures that the Defense Department was paying $400 each for eight-dollar claw hammers, for example, the military is said to have added 7,000 additional staffers to solve its spare-parts problems. One bill currently before Congress proposes to disallow 14 types of overhead charges on contract costs, half of which are already prohibited by previous statutes and regulations.

Neither of these responses will solve the problem. As *Brotherhood of Arms* makes clear, there are few villains in these tales, and already too much red tape. The essential problem is found in the imbalance between what defense contractors can do well and what the military demands that they do. Even before Ronald Reagan's military buildup it was becoming apparent that crash programs to quickly build whole new

ROSEAU VALLEY

(for George Odlum)

A shovelful of blackbirds
shot over the hill's shoulder,
and memory twittered backwards
past the juddering steam-roller

gravelling the asphalt road
and ironing each shadow,
to the sugar-mill that roared
into silence, and the sudden echo

of canes when they used to grow
canes in this sweet valley,
and from the cane in arrow
blackbirds shot in volley

after volley of acolytes
making every week a Sunday
after the strike. No lights
on in the abandoned factory

now. Trolleys rust on ties.
The crop switched to bananas
instead, and a boy's paradise
went in sheaves of hosannas.

Between the lines the grass
thickens, an old box-car will wait
in vain for those iron stanzas
to pass with their fragrant freight.

The factory's bleached galvanised
roof buckles. The sheets grapple
the iron-wristed wind that prised
its last nails, but the chapel

at Jacmel, that chains or unchains
the joined wrists, shoulders
still bending like canes
whatever the crop, stays old as

the valley, and the Litany
moves to the molasses accents
of peasant-priests from Brittany
or Alsace-Lorraine. Incense

continues in the same vein
like charcoal smoke on a hill
roping Roseau to heaven,
but the breath went out of the mill.

How green and sweet I've kept it
to my childish soul! It shines
when a scything wind has swept it
with a shadowy sigh, but my lines

led to what end? They provided
no comfort like the French priests'
or the Workers' Hymn that divided
heaven from a wage increase,

and what use was poetry if it
paid nothing for burnt-out labour,
not a six-penny moon after profit
or a cold sun's worth of copper?

What good was that levelling
green light to those valley-kind
folk? So over chimney and hovel then
a cloud's fist began to darken

with rain in it, and the lightning
of crackling, amplified speeches
bringing a brown roar of rain
from the irrigation ditches,

till the skirt-assembling flood
gathered in its full force
at the factory-gate, then swirled
bewildered at its next course,

since every scarecrow that had risen
from the canes with crucified cry
was pierced by the factory siren
or the belfry's cold eye,

and again, like dishevelled cane
after the crop is burnt,
those charred stalks would thresh again
for the Church, for Government,

but that Monday, road-wide
they marched, sheaves in the fist
as Police-cars purred beside
them towards Government Office,
and a brown river climbed the hill
as their hymn flowed up the Morne,
and behind them the sugar-mill
looked after the canes alone.

My hand shared the same unrest as
the workers, but what were its powers?
They were emblematic harvesters
turning my own Book of Hours.

Demons snarl in each flag, and
the smoke coils from a thurifer,
the dream of the opium dragon
makes a Lenin of Lucifer,

and countries of cereal grain
brighten and fade in the shadow
of a passing flag, so the cane
was gone with the blackbird's arrow,

and gone with their harvest, what?
My own vision that made them once
'like orient and immortal wheat'
or the height of indifference?

But was mine a different realm
really? Clouds or mitres shift
the shadows of their long regime
over the fields, not my gift

that can never repay my island
enough, that gives no communion
of tongues, whose right hand
never lifted its sheaves in union,

but sweats in the trickling resin
of a hill's hot armpit, as
my trust in my road is rising
from the sea's amphitheatres

to inhale a bracing horizon
above belfry or chimney where
the steam-roller's heartbeat dies on
the blue, incredible air.

DEREK WALCOTT

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fleets and weapons systems invite trouble. The larger and more ambitious the undertaking and the faster the timetable, the more likely it is that the final result will be poorly built and extravagantly expensive. The bigger and more elaborate the project, the fewer prime contractors will be able to bid on it—resulting in less competition. The quicker the buildup, the less experienced will be the contractors' work force—resulting in shoddy workmanship. The more sudden the escalation in the Pentagon's demands and expectations, the greater will be the tendency for misunderstanding and distrust to develop on both sides of the contract.

If we can learn anything from the rise and fall of General Dynamics over the last 15 years, it is that production systems take time to work right. The Pentagon has as much—perhaps more—responsibility for helping its contractors become capable of delivering the goods as for preventing fraud and penalizing waste. And this means that the Pentagon must, at the very least, plan its needs with a realistic understanding of the present capabilities of the private sector. It is a lesson that the Reagan administration—with its propensity to spend vast sums on all manner of military gadgetry—shows no sign of having learned.

ROBERT B. REICH

EMINENT VICTORIA

Queen Victoria in Her Letters and Journals: A Selection by Christopher Hibbert

(Viking, 374 pp., $25)

Why do certain aspects of the past elicit our amusement? We read or hear that it was once considered fashionable for women to wear almost unbearably tight stays; that there was a time when college students had to attend chapel services every morning; that it took several days to travel from New York to Washington—and we chuckle. Why? The answer, of course, is that we feel superior, that we have put old-fashioned attitudes and forms of behavior behind us, just as modern means of travel have enabled us to discard the stagecoach. Our laughter, more often then not, is the outward and risible symbol of inner feelings of condescension and self-satisfaction.

Often, though not always. One of the numerous merits of Christopher Hibbert's apt and intelligent selection from Queen Victoria's letters and journals is that it makes it possible for us to discriminate between the various kinds of laughter evoked by the writings and utterances of a historical figure who has lent her name to a period whose precepts and prohibitions we believe we have put far behind us. And, pace Mrs. Thatcher, a good thing, too!

There is, first of all, the knowing smile elicited from the reader by the young monarch, barely 20, who remarks to her revered mentor, Lord Melbourne, that "I wished if possible never to marry." To which he in turn replies, "I don't know about that." (Three months later she proposes to Albert.) A similar, worldly wise amusement on the part of the reader meets Victoria's comment about her wedding night—"we did not sleep much"—and her artless remark in her journal a couple of days later that "my dearest Albert put on my stockings for me. I went in and saw him shave; a great delight for me."

Children began to arrive in due course. The Queen made no bones about the intensity of her dislike of the physical process of childbirth. Our laughter is sympathetic rather than patronizing when she tells her uncle, King Leopold of the Belgians, in replying to his expressed hope that her first child would be the first of many:

> You cannot really wish me to be the "Mamma d'une *nombreuse* famille," for I think you will see with me the great inconvenience a large family would be to us all, and particularly to the country, independent of the hardship and inconvenience to myself; men never think, at least seldom think, what a hard task it is for us women to go through this very often.

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The pleasures of natural childbirth belong to our own day. Victoria had no hesitation in praising "that blessed chloroform," first administered to her at the birth of her fourth son in 1853. In 1858 she wrote to her daughter that "what you say of the pride of giving life to an immortal soul is very fine, dear, but I own I cannot enter into that; I think much more of our being like a cow or a dog at such moments, when our poor nature becomes so animal and unecstatic." It is the disparity of tone between what we expect from royalty on such a subject—nobly patient resignation to fate—and what we get instead—down-to-earth protest and complaint—that causes our amusement here.

Which is not to say that the Victoria of legend, the mournful widow who withdrew from public life in order to devote herself to the memory of her beloved Albert, who died in 1861, fails to emerge in these extracts from her letters and journals. When the queen, at the time of her own 18th wedding anniversary, writes to her daughter that "Papa is unlike anyone who lives or ever lived and will live," we may smile indulgently, recognizing that all happy families are alike. On the other hand, when writing to the same daughter seven years after Albert's death, his widow not only calls him "too perfect for this world," but goes on to recall her awareness of "how dreadfully the wickedness of this world grieved his pure, noble, heavenly spirit, how indeed, like our Saviour." Here the amazed smile that comes to our lips is less one of sympathetic recognition than of estrangement—a smile not so much of superiority or condescension as of wonderment at the strange customs of a remote and alien tribe.

A SIMILAR reaction might well be evoked by the queen's urging her 18-year-old granddaughter to work regularly, in these terms: "Some knitting and plain work for the poor is such a nice occupation"; or telling Gladstone that education "ruined the health of the higher classes uselessly, and rendered the working classes unfitted for good servants and laborers."

That this amuses us, in part, by its candor—today few people who might still share the queen's sentiments would dare express them—is no accident. For Victoria's outspokenness was one of her most characteristic and, to us, most endearing traits. A frequent victim is her son "Bertie," often "poor Bertie" (first Prince of Wales, later Edward VII), whom his mother thought "very dull" and far from handsome, "with that painfully small and narrow head, those immense features and total want of chin." He was 16 then. Five years later (in 1863) he married Princess Alexandra of Denmark. The subject of head size still had a prominent place in Queen Victoria's mind, perhaps because of her interest in phrenology. "Are you aware," she writes to her daughter, "that Alix has the smallest head ever seen? I dread that—with his small empty brain—very much for future children."

BUT the queen's outspokenness was not confined to family members. In 1878, when Gladstone was engaged in harassing her favorite prime minister, Disraeli, she wrote that he was going on like a madman. Two years later she informed her private secretary that "she will sooner abdicate than send for or have any communication with that half-mad firebrand who would soon ruin everything and be a Dictator. Others but herself may submit to his democratic rule, but not the Queen." Within a couple of weeks the Liberals won the general election, and Victoria found herself with no alternative but to ask the firebrand to form the new government. But her private view of him did not change: "The mad passion of one half-crazy enthusiast is ruining all the good of six years peaceful, wise government"—by Disraeli!

We laugh at her frankness, and at the exaggerated language that went with what she herself once called her naturally passionate nature. But as we finish reading Mr. Hibbert's selections and take a measured look at the views and personality they reveal, it turns out that Victoria has the last laugh, after all. For what comes through most powerfully in these letters and journals, when all is said and done, is a quality of humane concern mingled with common sense that is even more impressive than the queen's quite remarkable talent for sketching and watercoloring or her capacity to savor *Lohengrin* as much as *The Mill on the Floss* and *Jane Eyre*. When Lord Shaftesbury, the famous Evangelical peer, had succeeded in carrying a resolution forbidding Sunday mail delivery, the prime minister was told that "the Queen thinks it a very false notion of obeying God's will, to do what will be the cause of much annoyance and possibly of great distress to private families." She had no use for the English "very dull Sundays," and wanted museums kept open, "for it is the only way to improve the masses and check drink."

Check, but not abolish. For, as Victoria wrote to Gladstone, "total abstinence is an impossibility; and though it may be necessary in individual cases, it will not do to insist on it as a general practice." She would, in any event, not bear the abuse of the lower classes by the upper classes for immoral behavior, since their "betters" engaged in conduct ten times as evil without incurring the slightest blame: "The so-called immorality of the lower classes is not to be named on the same day with that of the higher and highest. This is a thing which makes my blood boil, and they will pay for it."

AT A TIME when many English people were in a state of almost hysterical rage about the murder of innocent white women and children during the Indian mutiny of 1857, the queen pointed out that that sort of thing is bound to happen in the course of civil wars. For example, during the Duke of Wellington's Spanish campaign things occurred that would equal much that was happening in India, "and they were the acts of British Soldiers, not of black blood." She was far from sharing her daughter's unbounded love for everything English:

> Loving and admiring my own country as I do, I have seen so much of the cold, harsh cheerlessness of my countrymen and have seen with such grief the very bad effect it has had on your two elder brothers . . . *that I cannot admire much of it as* you do.

Perhaps most immediately moving for present-day readers is her comment on the frightful bloodshed of the Franco-German war of 1870: "With the weapons of today it is really too ghastly, and when this war is at an end, there ought to be some attempt made to find means of preventing such wars once and for all. Otherwise the peoples will become extinct!" That characteristically Victorian exclamation mark lingers in one's memory, long after the queen's undoubted quirks and limitations have been duly recognized and forgotten.

In a famous sentence in E. P. Thompson's preface to his *Making of the*

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English Working Class, he expressed a desire "to rescue the poor stockinger, the Luddite cropper, the 'obsolete' handloom-weaver, the 'Utopian' artisan, and even the deluded follower of Joanna Southcott, from the enormous condescension of posterity." But posterity condescends to queens as well as to stockingers. It certainly condescended to Victoria. Of course a rescue operation was begun by (of all people) Lytton Strachey, who, in writing his biography, came to scoff and stayed to admire. More recently, it has been carried on by Mrs. Woodham-Smith and by Lady Longford. With this volume, Mr. Hibbert joins the queen's rescue squad. But now it has almost managed to send her victorious.

JOHN CLIVE

John Clive teaches modern British history at Harvard University. He is the author of *Macaulay: The Shaping of the Historian* (Knopf).

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VISITING AN EMERGENCY

Freedom Rising
by James North

(Macmillan, 336 pp., $19.95)

It isn't hard to imagine how it happened. A young American writer, left-leaning and idealistic, travels to a distant country where the people are oppressed and the politics seem to pit good against evil. He meets other idealistic young people, fighting for their rights and their dignity, people whose political circumstances have pushed them a little further than his circumstances pushed him, leading them in many cases to take up arms. He is appalled by what he sees but also excited. He visits the young fighters in the bush, attends their rallies, drinks with them in their local beer halls, even does a few small tasks—mostly carrying messages in and out of the country—for their underground movement. It is hardly surprising that he should come back with a vivid, passionate, and somewhat overly romantic book, a lively journalistic account that all too often leaves the reader wondering just how much has been left out.

James North spent four and a half years in southern Africa, based for the most part in Swaziland, and traveled extensively, often hitchhiking, throughout the region. Along the way he talked to writers and soccer players, truck drivers, waiters, businessmen, mine foremen and guerrilla fighters. He is a good travel writer with an eye for detail, be it in the streets of Soweto or the deserts of Namibia, and a vivid caricaturist. He visited the region at a historic moment, just as Rhodesia turned into Zimbabwe and the storm began to burst in South Africa—and in the end he caught something of the extraordinary feel of both places.

But *Freedom Rising* is not a travelogue: both the subject and the author's politics demand more than that. "From afar," he says near the end of the book, "the apartheid system seems like a monstrous wickedness, a convincing proof of the evil in mankind." His purpose, in looking as closely as he did, was (or should have been) to find the complexity: not to excuse, surely, but to explain, to see the real people and ordinary motives and thus to begin to understand what's gone wrong. Unfortunately he has done no such thing: for all the telling examples and human detail, North's book remains a starkly shallow moral tale.

Where and how exactly does his judgment seem off? There can be no quarreling, certainly, with his deep and passionate abhorrence of apartheid. He thinks intelligently about its causes—particularly its economic roots—and shows a keen sense of the humiliations involved. He is also fully justified in his impatience to see it brought quickly to an end. And yet somehow he fails to do justice to his better political instincts.

He seems, for one thing, quite unable to resist the temptation to political rhetoric. Try as he has to write a story, to describe the situation on the ground in southern Africa, he simply cannot control his own impulse to preach and hector. Thus again and again he intervenes heavy-handedly, railing about the "evil" Bantustan system or comparing the Afrikaners to Nazis pursuing a policy of deliberate "genocide."

Even at its most concrete and most descriptive, there is something disturbingly tendentious about the book. To begin with, there are the obvious stereotypes: the whites "sipping gin and tonic at sundown in the gardens of their large homes, while their servants move discreetly in the background" or, some chapters later, the crowd of archetypal "rural poor" attending a rally in a Zimbabwean village. Beyond this, even North's particular portraits seem on reflection too much caricature: the well-meaning but patronizing white hitchhiker, the fiendish white farmer who enjoys shooting blacks, the studious young black whose honorable convictions drive him to take up arms. So many of the people North meets turn out to be typical, and the ones who aren't—the writers, for example, or the people who aren't sure of what they think about politics—don't quite come to life in his pages.

It is, on one level, a stylistic problem, a matter of subtlety and literary skill, but it also raises questions about North's political assumptions—and about his thoroughness in reporting what he's seen. It's not that he's dishonest exactly; it's just that one cannot help wondering what else has been omitted or oversimplified. Why, for example, does he say so little about the increasing number of black and colored people who entered the middle class during the 1970s? He may feel that they

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are historically insignificant—may, that is, discount the reformist argument that their economic privileges might eventually translate into political rights. But that is hardly a good reason to leave them out of his account, as if he did not meet anyone like that or they did not exist.

Where, similarly, are the more liberal whites who believed, at least until recently, that reform was still a plausible option? North undoubtedly thinks they are deluded: all the more reason to describe them, and explicitly make that case. Why, finally, is there no discussion of the "Sullivan principles"—the guidelines for hiring blacks and treating them fairly that many American companies with interests in South Africa are using to press for gradual change?

In the long run, of course, North may be right: the center does seem to matter less and less in South African politics. So, certainly, one might conclude from the state of emergency and the increasing violence. As one black journalist tells him: "I have never met a 'moderate' black. We have what we might call moderate-radicals. Moderate on the outside, and radical on the inside." Like many people concerned about South Africa, North believes that the future is sure to be violent—the only questions are how violent and for how long—and he paints a deeply troubling picture of the many young people who now feel that they have no recourse but to take up arms. One progressive white, a former dominee of the Dutch Reformed Churches, put it neatly: "The question in South Africa used to be, 'Which side are you on?' It has now become, 'Which side will you fight for?' "

The problem is that, much as he deplores the violence, North is also clearly thrilled by the intensity of southern African politics—by the high stakes and clear enemies and uncomplicated goals. He is so evidently drawn to the heroic young fighters, and so naturally righteous himself, that he seems to find it virtually impossible to write critically about those who oppose apartheid. This romantic partisanship becomes particularly troubling in his chapters on Zimbabwean independence. There is so much missing from his account—so little about Robert Mugabe's ideological underpinnings, for example, or the fact that the new nation is becoming a one-party state—that one questions even North's relatively uncontroversial capsule history of the period. Why, here too, are the liberation fighters painted in such heroic colors, while everyone else (including the British mediators, generally thought to have made the best of a very difficult negotiation) is shown to be in some way lacking? And why does North have to bend over so far backward to defend even the atrocities committed by the revolutionary forces of Robert Mugabe and Joshua Nkomo? The answer, of course, is that he believes in their cause, and sees no reason not to take up their banner.

BUT IS ALL this really grounds for complaint? Why shouldn't North take sides? Why begrudge him his romanticism—particularly in a situation as unambiguous as southern Africa? The main reason is that it undermines his credibility as a reporter. From the beginning, North presents himself as curious traveler and raconteur, someone we can rely upon to act as our eyes and ears in southern Africa. His book offers little in the way of systematic argument or thesis: what makes it useful is its vivid descriptive power—and the way it effectively sets the stage for further thinking about South Africa. If, on the other hand, we are only seeing half the picture—a picture cropped and neatened up in accordance with North's political views—then it can hardly be taken as a reliable backdrop.

When on occasion North steps beyond his journalistic mandate—in the last chapter, for example, where he advocates disinvestment—his partisanship is much less troubling. North can be a skilled polemicist, one of the best on the left today, and some of his openly polemical writing is at once deft and stirring:

> As the war comes, the decisions are even more agonizing. Young whites must decide between the apartheid army and exile. Young blacks must choose whether to do open political work or join the underground; either way, they risk their liberty and often their lives. Older black people, together with sympathetic whites, have to decide the kind of support they can give to the national liberation movement. . . . In the end, there is the most terrible dilemma of all; my friends, many of them, are deciding whether to kill.
>
> . . . . We may admire the heroes of southern Africa as they fight to create a nation in which no one must make such terrible choices. But it is within our power to help them shorten the time of bloodshed.

Unlike much of the rest of his book—the supposedly objective, reportorial chapters—it works as well as it does

THE NEW REPUBLIC'S BEST BOOKS

Following is a list of books TNR *has recently reviewed and recommends.*

In the Name of Eugenics: Genetics and the Uses of Human Heredity by Daniel J. Kevles (Knopf). A history of excesses and a gallery of eccentrics. (Reviewed 8/5/85)

Her First American by Lore Segal (Knopf). A love story, melting-pot style. (8/5/85)

The Call: An American Missionary in China by John Hersey (Knopf). An unsentimental saga of one Christian's half-century in China. (5/13/85)

Reflections on Gender and Science by Evelyn Fox Keller (Yale University Press). How men have shaped the scientific method, and women might help reshape it. (7/15&22/85)

Byron and Greek Love: Homophobia in 19th-Century England by Louis Crompton (University of California Press). A revealing chapter in the history of intolerance. (7/1/85)

Slow Homecoming by Peter Handke, translated by Ralph Manheim (Farrar, Straus & Giroux). Three metaphoric and metaphysical parables. (6/17/85)

Late Settings by James Merrill (Atheneum). A new, elegiac collection of lyrics. (8/5/85)

Lives of the Saints by Nancy Lemann (Knopf). Coming of age in a daze in New Orleans. (6/24/85)

Irving Babbitt: An Intellectual Study by Thomas E. Nevin (The University of North Carolina Press). An intellectual biography of humanism's stern champion. (6/17/85)

The Heavens and the Earth: A Political History of the Space Age by Walter A. McDougall (Basic). The story of the state, the scientists, and the exploitation of the galaxy. (6/3/85)

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precisely because it does not pretend to be something it is not.

Freedom Rising has appeared at an important moment, a time of palpable new urgency in the townships of Johannesburg and the Eastern Cape. At the same time, for that and other reasons, South Africa has become a pressing issue for an increasing number of Americans, one of a very few uncomplicated rallying points for liberal indignation and humanitarian concern. All the more important, against this background, that we try to understand what is really happening in South Africa—that we see it as something more than stereotyped "Nazism" or the incarnation of evil.

There is nothing wrong with North's passionate outrage or his urgent sense that something must be done. To doubt his partisan reporting, to regret the lack of shading and moral complexity, is not to question his appeal for a resolute response—be it simply condemning apartheid or urging disinvestment or otherwise pressing for change. About one thing, at least, North is dead right: things can only get worse in South Africa. All the more reason, no matter how strongly we feel, to see it as sharply as we can, without romanticizing or vilifying anyone.

TAMAR JACOBY

Tamar Jacoby is deputy editor of *The New York Times* Op-Ed page.

CORRESPONDENCE, *from page 6*

that the SS-X-25 is an illegal new type and not a permitted modernized SS-13. As for encryption, the SALT II agreement states that neither party shall "impede" verification of compliance with the provisions of the treaty, not "block," as the article would have the reader believe. No one who is familiar with the extent of Soviet encryption can doubt that verification has been impeded by current Soviet encryption practices.

Current Soviet noncompliance does not present an unsolvable problem. The solutions are cessation and elimination of noncompliance behavior. The future of arms control will be based upon Soviet demonstration that they take their arms control obligations seriously.

M. EIMER
U.S. Arms Control & Disarmament Agency
Washington, D.C.

UNWELCOME GUESTS

To the editors:

Maura Moynihan's interview with Rajiv Gandhi ("A Chat with Rajiv," June 24) is a good example of the common failure to challenge indefensible arguments. She quotes Rajiv Gandhi as saying, "The Soviets are there [in Afghanistan] because they have been invited in by the Karmal government. I don't see the Karmal government asking them to go back while this sort of pressure is applied through the *mujahadeen* and through Pakistan."

The facts are as follows: the Indian Embassy in Kabul reported Soviet troops in the Kabul area by December 24, 1979. On December 27 they staged a coup in Kabul against the government of Hafizola Amin, who was executed a few days later, and installed Babrak Karmal as head of a new government. Moynihan could have asked Rajiv Gandhi if he would apply the same principles in similar cases. Would he maintain that German troops had a right to be in Norway at the invitation of the Quisling government, suppressing the Norwegian resistance movement that was receiving British support? Or that the Japanese army had a right to be in China at the invitation of the Wang Ching-wei government, suppressing resistance that was receiving American support? His reply would have been interesting.

MICHAEL LINDSAY
Chevy Chase, Maryland

THE DEMOCRATS SOLD OUT

To the editors:

In his one-sided attempt to savage President Reagan and his proposed tax reform plan, Robert S. McIntyre ("Inside the Sellout," June 24) plays fast and loose with history. McIntyre states "Reagan also gave the wealthy a huge tax cut in 1981—worth about $30,000 or more a year to families earning more than $200,000—by reducing the top individual tax rate from 70 percent to 50 percent. . . ."

In fact, the tax cut plan sent to Congress by President Reagan in 1981 did *not* contain the rate reduction that McIntyre refers to. This provision was added by the Democrats in the House (the sponsor was Congressman Brodhead, a liberal Democrat).

The debate over President Reagan's tax plan is already becoming contentious and this debate is not served by McIntyre's distortion of history in order to achieve, at best, a polemical debating point.

ABRAHAM M. LACKMAN
New York State Senate
Albany, New York

JENNINGS REPLIES

To the editors:

As a regular subscriber to THE NEW REPUBLIC for many years, I could not help but notice two sets of critical remarks in recent issues. Your most recent criticism (Cambridge Diarist, July 1) was, as you must know by looking at the date of *The Journal of Palestine Studies* cited, offered very much out of context. The remarks by me that I would prefer not having Jews cover the story from Israel, nor Arabs from the Arab world, were made 11 years ago. Eleven years ago. It was a very tense time in the Middle East and the interview was given in the context of ABC's coverage.

As I pointed out to B'nai B'rith a year ago, time has a way of maturing us, and that is certainly not my view today. At the time I made those remarks, I could not have cast doubt on Tom Friedman of *The New York Times*. He had not been assigned to the area. I could not agree more with your assessment of him. There was no Begin government, and I agree with your assessment of Eric Silver.

PETER JENNINGS
New York, New York

NO NGO MURDER ASSENT

To the editors:

In my review of Richard Nixon's *No More Vietnams* ("The President as Pundit," June 10), I said that the Kennedy administration had "tacitly assented" to the assassination of South Vietnam's president, Ngo Dinh Diem. As former members of that administration have reminded me, that's not really true. President Kennedy assented to the coup while imagining that it might not end in murder. This corrected version of the story is, if anything, more revealing about the intentions and illusions that drew the United States into Vietnam than my incorrect version was. I regret the error.

JAMES FALLOWS
Washington, D.C.

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

Like a Virgin

AFTER A YEAR AND A HALF of research and taste tests with a demographically accurate sample of more than 2,400 TNR readers, I am proud to introduce a timely improvement of a proud tradition: "New Diarist." "New Diarist" is sweeter, smoother, and less fizzy than its well-known predecessor. The old Diarist formula owed much of its popularity to its effervescence: potshots at people we otherwise couldn't find room to criticize; hearty backslapping of our favorite authors, sports teams, and Third World liberation movements; intimate but irreverent musings about the dolts who run the Reagan administration, various religious sects, Arab countries, and sometimes all three. But our market research has shown us consistently losing in taste tests to *People*, *Penthouse*, and even the Accu-Weather map in *USA Today*. Part of the problem is the nature of the media food chain. Michael Jackson immolates his Jheri Curl pushing Pepsi; Eddie Murphy does a routine about black people going up in smoke; and last week Martha Bayles in TNR wrote at length about Murphy. Under the old Diarist formula I would now do a routine on Bayles, either praising her pellucid prose or denouncing her as an enemy of the Guatemalan people. Instead, I hold my comments on Bayles and present to you "New Diarist" for a new generation.

"IT'S GREAT TO GO TO A PARTY where people are actually dancing," a conservative Republican friend of mine exclaimed as she walked into a Washington party recently. In a darkened town house living room a collection of liberals, Democrats, and other misfits were getting down to the heavy-duty dance beat blasting out of the stereo; and pretty soon she was shaking it too. This was another episode in my favorite real-life soap opera, "All My Right-Wing Children." The cast of this Washington-based serial is made up of young intelligent men and women who face the continuing dilemma of reconciling their abiding faith in Reaganism with normal upper-middle-class appetites for the pleasures of our permissive culture. They oppose sexual promiscuity but favor premarital sex (and even in cases not involving themselves!); denounce the drug epidemic among black teenagers but tolerate the drug epidemic among their white friends; oppose the ERA, comparable worth, and feminism yet postpone pregnancy (exactly how, I cannot disclose) and advance the careers of their sisters, girlfriends, and themselves with NOW-like vigilance. Hypocrisy? Of course. But it's the kind of hypocrisy I can sympathize with. These friends are exactly like the liberals who favored busing while putting their kids in private schools. Their political impulses to improve society are clashing with their personal impulses to enjoy life. Over time I think they, like liberals, will learn from this conflict.

LIKE A VIRGIN touched for the very first time, the press reacted with prim indignation to the news that pop singer Madonna would appear nude in the September issue of *Penthouse* and *Playboy*. But the key word here is "like." The media lost their virginity on stories like this a long time ago. Once the pro forma tut-tutting was out of the way, hardy defenders of traditional values such as *USA Today* and *The New York Post* got down to the much more enjoyable business of describing Madonna's youthful indiscretions in full detail. Nobody is shocked anymore and nobody should be. Madonna made the cover of *Penthouse* for precisely the same reason she made the cover of *Time*. She is a model of contemporary success. Remember *Time*'s hilarious cover headline, "Madonna: Why She's Hot"? Christopher Lasch provided the answer in *The Culture of Narcissism*. In a chapter called "Changing Modes of Making It," Lasch argued that the Happy Hooker, not Horatio Alger, is now the prototype of American success. Lasch was talking about the prostitute as a social type, but he could just as well have been describing Madonna when he wrote, "She too sells herself for a living, but her seductiveness hardly signifies a wish to be well-liked. She craves admiration but scorns those who provide it and thus derives little gratification from her social successes. . . . She exploits the ethic of pleasure that has replaced the ethic of achievement but her career more than any other reminds us that contemporary hedonism, of which she is the supreme symbol, originates not in the pursuit of pleasure but in a war of all against all, in which even the most intimate encounters become a form of mutual exploitation." Too true. Madonna's genius is to flaunt the trappings of prostitution—the lacy lingerie, the bare belly button, the "Boy Toy" belt buckle—and thus nominally make fun of the exploitation she embodies.

AM I THE ONLY PERSON who skipped nearly all of the TV coverage of Reagan's colon and all the uproar about the TWA hostages? Between the talk of surgical strikes and presidential guts, the two events fused into one viscerally unpleasant whole for me. I was feeling guilty about not paying more attention when I ran into Willie Medley, the syndicated columnist whose weekly "Conventional Wisdom" column has won him such influence among Washington insiders. He summed up the meaning of both episodes for me. Medley, cordial and plump as always in his Dartmouth debate club tie, disagreed with my contention that media coverage of the two events was similarly voyeuristic and gullible. "In the one case you had a genuine national crisis; in the other a cynical excuse by a small group of people to promote their own narrow political goals," he said. "For example, Nancy's deep concern about how perception of the president's operation might affect Congress's willingness to finally cut waste, fraud, and abuse from our staggering national deficit caused by Democratic social engineering was a legitimate page-one, banner headline story." "And the networks' decision to interview the families of the TWA hostages?" I asked. My obtuseness surprised him. "Appeasement by any other name," he explained.

NEXT WEEK, back by popular demand, "Diarist Classic."

J.M.

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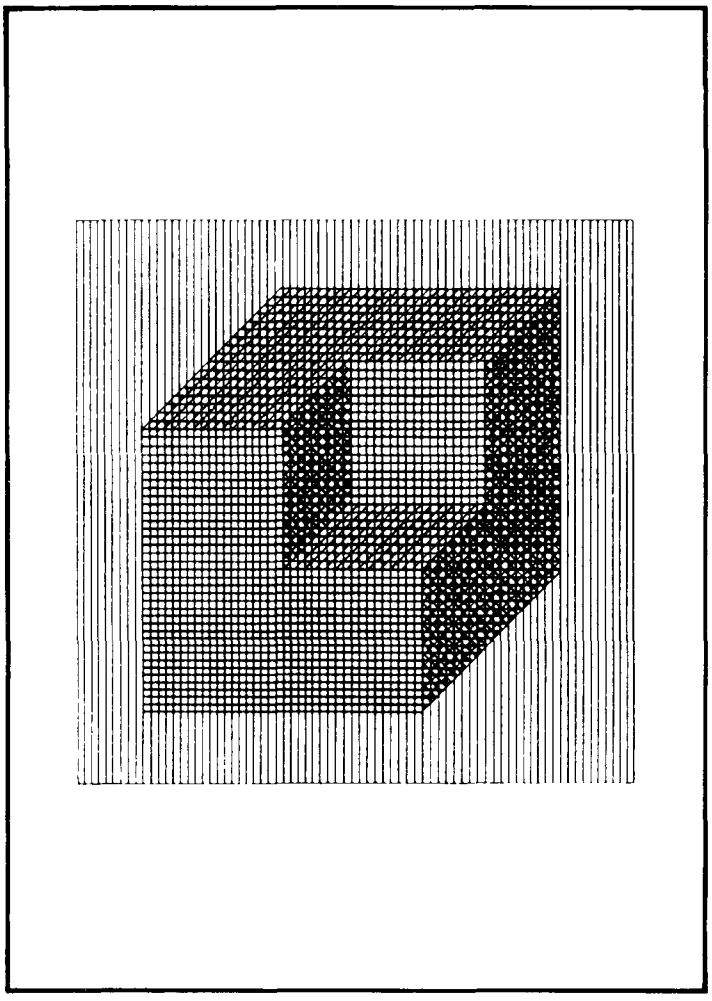

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